

SOME

R. Edwards.
1733.

MOTIVES

AND

INCENTIVES

To the Love of

V GOD,

Pathetically Discours'd of
in a Letter to a Friend.

BY

The Hon^{ble} ROBERT BOYLE.

The Third Edition much Corrected.

Let us consider one another, to provoke unto Love.
Heb. 10. 24.

*London, Printed for Henry Herringman, and
are to be sold at his Shop at the Anchor in the
lower Walk of the New Exchange. 1663.*



TO
THE COUNTESS
OF
WARWICK.

My Dear Sister,



Expect You should
somewhat wonder, that
after having for above
Eleven years been
careful to keep this
following Letter from the Publick
View, and that too notwithstanding
the Sollicitation (not to say Importu-
nity) of divers Illustrious Persons,
and even Your Commands, to Release
it from its Confinement; I should now
at length give way to its Passing A-

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brodd into the *World*, and its making
You a Publick and Solemn Address.
Where'o e judging my self oblig'd to
give You an Account of a Paper, for
which You have been long pleas'd so
Highly and so Obligingly to concern
Your self, I must, to remove Your
Wonder, inform You, That I am re-
duc'd to this Publication in my own
Defence. For, whilst I was far from
Dreaming of permitting this Epistle
to pass out of my Closet, it happen'd
that a broken Copy of it did (by I know
not what Misfortune for me) fall into
the hands o' a Necessitous person, who
would needs perswade himself, that,
by Printing it, he might relieve some
of his present Wants; and thereupon
proffer'd to se'll the Copy for a sum of
Mony. But my good Fortune leading
him to a Stationer, to whom my name
was not unknown, he, very civilly,
sent me forthwith notice of the Pro-
position

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position that was made him, and after
came himself to acquaint me, that the
Copy, about which he had been treated
with, being but One of Two or
Three that were then abroad, some or
other of them would, questionless, soon
find the way to the Press. This unwel-
come Accident did little less trouble
than Surprize me; for, Besides that it
impos'd on me the Necessity of a Pub-
lication I had so long declin'd, and Be-
sides that I knew, that Com-
posures of a very differing
Nature being expected from
me, the appearing of This, instead of
Them, would make this Unwelcome
to many, though it had fewer Imper-
fections than it has: Besides these
things, (I say) my Sight was then,
and is still, so impair'd by a distemper
in my Eyes; and the Hours I could dis-
pose of were so præ-ingag'd to Philoso-

Some Treati-
ces relating to
Experimental
Philosophy.

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phical Themes, that I could not promise my self so much as to Read it over before its going to the Printer. But considering after all this, that the Copy I had by me was like to prove more Full, and less Faulty, than any of those that some endeavour'd to obtrude upon the World, I thought it less Inconvenient to venture mine own abroad, than to run the hazard of a Sur-reptious Edition of a Discourse, that could so ill bear the appearing with any other Blemishes than those it brought with it into the World from my Pen. And therefore, having put it into the hands of Persons, whose eminent Abilities, the more Knowing part of the Nation has long and justly admir'd, and begg'd their Impartial Opinion and Castigations of it, (giving them entire Liberty to Alter or Expunge whatever they dislik'd;) and
finding

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finding (by hastily turning over the
Leaves) that their Castigations were
onely enough to let me see , that they
had heedfully read it over ; and were
accompanied with Encouragements ,
which care was taken to keep me from
looking upon as meer Complements : I
let it go to the Press , without so much
as having once Perus'd it , or heard it
read over , since the Stationer first gave
me the Advertisement I told you of.
Which I made the less scruple to do ,
because a Critick , whose Judgment
and Piety I much reverence , seriously
endeavoured to perswade me , that I
ought not in Conscience to decline pub-
lishing , what he was pleased to think
proper to Kindle or Cherish the Flames
of Divine Love in the Breasts of the
Readers. And my Haste it self did af-
terwards Promise me these Advan-
tages , That notwithstanding my

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Book's not coming forth sooner, I should not lose the Excuse of Youth I had when it was Written: nay, and That the Faulty passages which may be met with in it, will perhaps be charged upon those that suffer'd them to pass Uncorrected, when they had so absolute a Power to Expunge or Reform them. These, and the like Motives, having induc'd me to consent to the Publication of the following Letter, I needed not deliberate long, To whom I should address it. For, since that Accomplish'd Lindamor, whom it so much Concern'd, has left the World, there is no Person in it to whom this Address is any thing near so due, as unto You, dear Sister. It was at that Delicious Leeze, where You are now the Mistress, that this Letter was written; and it was of You that I borrow'd those hours I spent in writing it.

'Twas

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'Twas to You that I shew'd it almost
Sheet by Sheet, before I resolv'd to
send it away. 'Tis You that can best
Excuse the Imperfections of it, as
knowing not only the more Obvious, but
the more Private Avocations and other
Disadvantages, among which it was
penn'd. 'Tis You that have ever since
sollicit'd me to divulge it, and have
given me the greatest Encouragements
to do so, not only by those Sollicitations
which imply'd Your Own favourable
Opinion of it, but by procuring me (by
Concealing or Disguising my name) the
unsuspected Opinions of divers com-
petent Judges. In a word, this Address
belongs upon so many Scores to You,
that I could not make it any where else,
without manifestly Wronging You. I
know, Dear Sister, that it is Not usu-
al to Dedicate Books to so near a Re-
lation; and that it is usual in Dedic-
atory Epistles, both to Depreciate what
one

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one has Written, and to Extol the Person that one Writes too, especially if it be one of Your Sex and Quality. But You know too, that I never swore Allegiance to Custom, and therefore will not, I suppose, wonder to see me as little Sollicitous to conform to it on This occasion as on Others. In an Age, when so few Persons have Merit enough, to keep that from being Flattery, which should be but Praise, I am not at all Ambitious of casting my self upon the unhappy Necessity, of either Flattering, or appearing Rude; when by better choosing the Objects of my Addresses, I can, as Occasion requires, give Praises without Untruth, or forbear them without Incivility. Nor dare I presume, that a Lye ceases to be a Fault, by being put into a Dedicatory Epistle; as Antiently the Hurtful Beasts forgot their Pernicious Nature, when brought
into

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into the Ark. Not to mention, that Books of Devotion have generally the strange and unhappy Fate, of being Less Welcome to them that Most, than to them that Less need them. As for the Discourse I present You, though My opinion of it may be guess'd at, by the Privacy to which I have so long Confin'd it: Yet because, as in Physick, to have a good Opinion of the Medicine; and the Doctor; so in Books of Devotion (which are a kind of Physick for the Mind) to have one of the Composure, or of the Writer, both inclines us to look after the Prescriptions, and Advantages their Operations; For this reason I shall say nothing to Disparage a Discourse, which is of a Nature to aim more at the being Practis'd by the Readers, than the being Pardon'd; and shall not at all repine to see it find from the Publick as Favourable

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ble a Reception, as it has hitherto met with in Closets. And now, Dear Sister, though I know You will not; yet, I doubt, my other Readers will expect, that this Letter should, according to the Mode of Epistles Dedicatory, be Concluded with Commendations of You, and Complements to You. It being almost as much out of fashion in such Addresses to Omit giving praises, as 'tis to Believe the praises given on such occasions. But, though I can Praise You without either Disbelieving my self, or Fearing to be disbeliev'd by any that knows You; yet, besides that our Relation, and our Friendship, would make such a Way of writing misbecoming me on All occasions; I know, Your Piety and Your Modesty, would peculiarly disallow it upon This; where the Subject I am to entertain You with is of such a Nature

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ture, as would make a Flaunting Address, but a very Unsuitable Introduction to it. The Nature of my Theme, as well as the Strictness of Your Virtue, and Our Friendship, forbidding me here to celebrate You, otherwise than by letting the World see, that I dare even in a Dedicatory Address, without fear of displeasing You, forbear to Celebrate You. And if it be demanded, Why then I refrain not likewise from writing to You a Dedication? I shall Answer, That I am unwilling to lose this Opportunity of making a Publick Acknowledgment, that as I have the Honour to be Your Brother, and Your Friend, so I have the Justice to think it very much my Happiness to be so: especially since You are pleased to assure me, That my Relation to You has rather been the Occasion than the Ground of a Friendship,

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*ship, that does, whilst it enjoyns me
to Profess my self without Com-
plement, Oblige me to be, with all the
Sincerity that's Possible,*

My Dear Sister,

Your most affectionate
Brother, and most
faithful humble
Servant,

ROBERT BOYLE.

Advertisements to the Reader.

(As they were written some years since, when some Intelligent Persons were to have a sight of the following Discourse.)

TO prevent those Scruples which else might arise in the perusal of the ensuing Discourse, the Reader of it is requested to take notice

I. That though Ignorance hath been of late so much in fashion with too many of our Young Nobility, that some passages of the ensuing Papers may seem unfit to have been written to a Young Gentleman, yet the Person they were addrest to, being both a Traveller, a Linguist, and a Scholar, it was not improper to discourse with him at the rate of supposing him so qualify'd.

II. That the ensuing Letter was not written Single, being but the Last of Divers, wherein Love in general was Confessed, Justifi'd, and Celebrated; wherein the Received way of Making Love was Explicated, Defended, and Opposed; wherein Constancy and Inconstancy in Love were argued For and Against; wherein Platonick Love was Explicated, Celebrated, and Derided; wherein

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wherein the Cure of Love was Proposed and Prosecuted; wherein (to dispatch) the Controverted Points concerning Love were discours'd of in a way suited to the several Themes, and to the Humours and Principles of the supposed Writers. But all the Former Papers, (written in Complement to a fair Lady) though very free from the guilt of either Licentiousness or Prophaneness, have been by the Author judged too little Serious, either to appear Alone, or to Accompany the ensuing Discourse, wherein he has expressed his Own Opinions, as in the former he but deduced those of Imaginary Persons.

III. That the following Paper was to have been Attended by another, wherein the Properties and Duties of Seraphick Love were to have been Explicated and insisted on, but the Author, before he had written that Other, accidentally meeting with a French Book, wherein, L'Ammon. Divin. de Mr. du Moulin. though what he had already Discours'd of were not handled, he found that much of what he had designed to set down was Anticipated; and the most pertinent Considerations his intended Themes suggested, were skilfully displayed already: he fear'd it might be Injurious to his Reader, and himself, if he should either turn a Transcriber of other's Notions, or decline the Best thoughts belonging to his Theme, that the Less Good ones might pass without suspicion for his Own.

IV. That

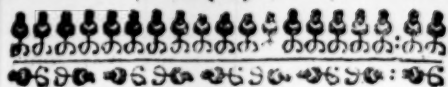
Advertisements to the Reader.

IV. That the ensuing Trifle having been written in Haste, and by Snatches, amongst distracting Avocations, and far from Literary Accommodations, is freely submitted to the Censure of Learned and Impartial Perusers, specially Divines: who are by the Author requested to believe its mistaking Passages, and Unwary Expressions, (if it contain any such) to have been altogether Unintentional, and such as they shall never find it to be more than One Labour to make him Discern and Retract; he being Resolved, by God's assistance, to continue still Obedient enough to all clearer Discoveries of Truth, to be able to say, Errare Possum, Hæreticus esse Nolo. And as he is on his part so Resigned, and so willing to be Rectify'd, so he expects this Equity from those, to whose Judgments he Submits, that, considering he intended not to write a Solemn and Regular Treatise, but a Private and Familiar Epistle, they will pass by such Unaccuracyes as are wont to be Incident to Composures of this later Nature. He presum'd he might sometimes make Bold with the Vulgar Laws of Tenses, treating of an Eternity that admits them not. He hop'd, that the Freedom taken in some of his Expressions concerning Love, and the wanted Objects of it, would be excus'd, by its being exacted by the Design he had upon Lindamor, though he had not (which yet he has) otherwise accounted for it. He intends not to atone those (too

In a Dedication of all the forementioned Letters to my Lady T. J.

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often erroneous) Traditions of the Vulgar whence he sometimes draws Comparisons, that he may not deny himself the Liberty taken by the Generality of Writers (without excepting the Learned sort of them) who scruple not in Popular Composures to make Similies and Allusions grounded on Popular Traditions and Persuasions. As for these common Places, which the Method of our Author's Discourse allow'd him not to Decline, he hopes the Reader will Discern by his way of Writing, that he loves to use them, not as Travellers, but as Hunters use the High-ways: For the Traveller, when he once gets into the Road, makes it his business to Keep in it; whereas the Hunter, if he meets one lying in his way, is not fond of Staying in it, but nimbly Crosses it, or Travels so much of it, as is requisite to be past through in the pursute of his Game. And lastly, if in some few Passages of the following Letter (especially about the beginning of it) the Expressions are less Grave and Solemn than the Design; the Author hopes, that even They will yet appear tolerably Serious, for the Aeriest parts of a Letter, written by one Young Gentleman to another.



SOME MOTIVES

To the Love of
G O D.

My Dearest Lindamor.

I Am very much delighted to learn, both by the voice of Fame, and the Information of much more credible Relators, that *Hermione's* cold Usage has cur'd you of the Feaver her scorching eyes had given you : And that when once you found your self reserved to shew, what wonders her Eyes were able to perform, you seasonably resolv'd to become an Instance of the power, rather of Reason, than of Love ; and accordingly, did your self the right to frustrate the vain hopes, your Insulting Mistress cherish'd to manifest

nifest in you, That her Charms were capable to make your Flame persevere, when her Change had made it as well causeless as hopeless. I could wish indeed for your sake, that you owed your Cure more entirely to your Reason, and less to your Resentment; That the Extraction of your Freedom may no ways blemish it. But since unallay'd Satisfaction is joys too Heavenly, to fall to many mens shares on Earth, I cannot but conclude, that your Recovery even on these Terms deserves I should Congratulate it. For, the *French* say truly, that *Les plus courtes Folies sont les meilleures*. And Liberty being too high a Blessing to be divestible of that nature by Circumstances; I (that seldom deplore him, who by losing his Mistress recovers Himself) think that *Hermione* has but intentionally, not eventually disoblig'd you; and hath made your flames a better return, by restoring you your own Heart, than she could have done by exchanging hers for it. But that which not least endears to me your Recovery, is, That I am assur'd by Persons, from whom I dare Credit even so welcome News, that my endeavours prov'd so happy as to be conducive to it, and that the

the Considerations I ventur'd to present you, did at least so far contribute to your Freedome, as to give you the Desire and the Design of regaining it. For I hope, I need not tell you, that I seldom use Endeavours, whose Prosperousness is more welcome to me, than those, that aspire to serve *Lindamor*. And though I cannot ever pay you any Great Services in relation to my vastly Greater Desires, yet I can scarce do you Little ones in relation to the Delight resulting from the having done you any. Nor has the Joy which this success of my Discourses brings me, been sparingly increas'd by my having ventur'd them with much more Desire, than Expectation of their Prospering; and less out of any strong hope they would succeed, than out of an unwillingness to leave the means; I thought least improbable, unassay'd: being invited to excite you to greater hopes, than I durst allow myself for you; by the Example of Generals, who, whatsoever distrustfull thoughts they harbour in their breasts, suppose, that (before the Battel) to make their Souldiers fight successfully, 'tis as well conducive as requisite, by encouraging Orations, to make them think they

shall do so. For, although I endeavour'd indeed to perswade you, that Reason being born Sovereign of the Passions, though her Lenity or Supineness do sometimes both occasion and permit their Usurpations ; She is seldom so divested of her Native Power, but that whensoever she pleaseth to imploy what she hath left, she is able to resume what she hath lost : And though I was willing you should believe, that to perfect what your Resentment had begun, was a Task so easie, that the Victory was as much in your power, as the Resolution of attempting it ; Yet notwithstanding all this, I say, I was once half perswaded, that to undertake the Curing of a Lover was the next Weakness to the being one. And, *Lindamor*, to deal ingenuously with you, your Recovery hath circumstances in it, that make me very apprehensive, that you are not yet out of the danger of a Relapse, and that you have not half so absolutely abandon'd your former Amorous Constitution of mind, as the former Idol of it. I know that from a person, who, for one that hath never yet been hurt by *Cupid*, is accused of using him slightly and severely enough, you will expect Endeavours

deavours to preserve you from Relapses, by such dissuasions from Love, as its Votaries will scarce vouchsafe so mild a Title to, as that of Invectives against it. And I shall Ingenuously acknowledge, *Lindamor*, that I have been sometime, no very unready Satyrist on that Theme; and with a pen, relishing of the Liberty I cherish'd in my heart, endeavour'd to disabuse those servile Souls, that being born to Reason, so far degraded themselves, as to boast solely an excess of Passion; and had such low and narrow thoughts of Felicity and Misery, as to expect either from a Womans usage. All which I thought I might the freelier do, because having never known the infelicities of Love, but in the sufferings of others, I might probably suppose, that my Declamations against it would pass for the productions of my Reason, not my Revenge. But, *Lindamor*, though the extravagancies of some mens folly, have been sometimes too great, to let me avoid laughing somewhat Satyrically at it; yet I am really too little an enemy to Love, unless excessive or mis-plac'd, by indistinct and disfiguring Considerations, to represent to you the Noblest Passion of the Mind, as its most hide-

ous and Formidable Disease.

Señ. 1.

To Love even with some Passionateness the Person you would Marry, is not only Allowable but Expedient, being almost necessary to the Duty of fixing your Affection, where you have once engaged your Faith ; For, it hath been observ'd, that Love doth seldom suffer it self to be confin'd by other Matches than those of its own making. And few, but they, that are so Wise as they see cause to be almost in Love before hand with those they Marry, prove so Honest as afterwards to be in Love with none else. Since therefore, the Marriage of a wise man supposes at least as high a degree of Love, as he is capable to cherish without forfeiting that Title ; I can scarce disallow the being moderately in Love without being injurious to Marriage, which is a Relation, that though I can with much less reluctancy Permit others, than Contract my self ; yet dare I not absolutely condemn a condition of Life, as expedient to No man, without which, even Paradise and Innocence were not sufficient to compleat the Happiness of the First Man. Thus you see, *Lindamor*, that I do not promiscuously Quarrel with all sorts of Love, but endeavour

deavour onely to possess you with this Truth, That as antiently, among the Jews, there were odoriferous Unguents, which it was neither unusual nor unlawfull to annoint themselves with, or bestow upon their Friends ; but there was a certain peculiar Composition too, of a pretious Oyntment, which God having reserv'd to be employ'd in his own Service ; with that, the Perfuming of their friends was Criminal and Sacrilegious : So there are regulated degrees of Love, which 'tis not forbidden to harbor for a Friend, a Mistress, or a Wife ; but there is too a certain peculiar strain, or (if I may so call it) heroick Temperament of Love, which where ever it is found, makes it belong, as unalienable, as justly, unto GOD. A virtuous Wife may love both her Husband's Relations and her own, and yet be truly said to Love him with her whole heart ; because there is a certain unrivall'd degree of Kindness, and a peculiar sort of Love, which constitutes true Conjugal affection, that she confines to him, and reserves intirely for him, and would think it Criminal to harbour for any other Person : So a Religious Soul may obey the Command,

Exod 30.
31, 32.
of

of Loving God entirely, though she allow her Affections other Objects ; provided, they be kept in a due Subordination to, and kept from entring into Competition with that Love, which ought to be appropriated to Him ; and which results chiefly from, an either altogether, or almost unincreasable Elevation, and Vastness of Affection ; from an entire Resignment to, and an absolute Dependence on the Lov'd Party ; from a restless Disquiet upon the least sense or doubt of her Displeasure ; from a greater Concern in her Interests, than ones own ; from an Expectation no less than Felicity or Wretchedness from her Friendship or Indignation ; or at least a Perswadedness that nothing can be a greater Happiness than her Favour, or deserve the name of Happiness without it. For, where ever a Passion has these properties, or any of them conspicuous in it ; it cannot, but by being consecrated to God, avoid becoming injurious both to Him and to it self. The very Nobleness of it entitles Him to it : As in some Kingdoms, (and particularly here in *England*) though Veins of coarser Metals may belong to the Owner of the Soil they grow in, yet all the Mines of
the

the more perfect Metalls (as Gold and Silver) are by the Law made Mines Royal, and belong to the King, to whom their value appropriates them. By reflecting upon this peculiar Notion of Love, you may be pleas'd, *Lindamor*, to interpret such Indefinite Expressions as you may meet with in the following Discourse. And this Love, I have taken the freedom to style *Seraphick Love*, (not out of any affectation of Tumid Words or Titles, but) borrowing the name from (if the Romish Divines be good Marshals of the Heavenly Host) those nobler Spirits of the Cælestial Hierarchie, whose Name in the Language to which it belongs, expresses them to be of a Flaming nature ; and whose employment (mentioned in the * Evangelical Prophet's Mysterious Vision) sufficiently points at the Divine Object, to which the flames, that warm them, aspire and tend. And me-thinks, *Lindamor*, that you should find it no faint Invitation to embrace Seraphick Love, that you may have the Advantage, by making your self a Rival

to

The Name *Seraphim*, in Hebrew, springs from the Root *Saraph*, which signifies to burn or flame : Whence, *Numb. 21. 6.* those pernicious Creatures, that our Translators English, *Fiery Serpents*, are styled in the Original, *Hannechashim has-seraphim*.

* Isa. 6.
2, 3.

to these glorious Spirits, to make them your Friends, and the Honor to be engaged in a Service, where you are sure of such Illustrious Concurrents. At least if you be of the mind of that generous Youth, (to whose successfull Valour the Conquer'd World was both Theatre and Trophie) who refus'd to Run at the Olympick Games, because there were no Monarchs to run with him. But I fear, *Lindamor*, I have a little digress'd; since I might have told you in fewer words, that it is not my design in this Paper to declame against Love in general, or make a solemn Harangue of the Fickleness of Women; and that therefore, as when young Gallants (such as you, *Lindamor*) are subject to cast away their Love upon unfitting Objects, their discreet Friends, (sensible of the truth of the Italian Comick's Observation, that

*Onestà contra' amore
E troppo frale schermo
In giovinetto cuore.*

*In youthfull Hearts bare Vertue's
wont to prove
But a weak shield against the
darts of Love.)*

without

without taking any more than necessary notice of their former fond and stragling Passions, reclaim them by either matching them, or at least (in order thereunto) Engaging their addresses to Persons, whose Beauty or Prerogatives may both legitimate and confine their Affections: So I shall now endeavour to prevent the future Gaddings of your Love to Objects, that cannot deserve so transcendent and disinterest a one, as I have observ'd yours to have been; by preferring and engaging it to the True Object that Passion was born to, the Noblest it can aspire to, and the most Satisfying it can enjoy. Yes, *Lindamor*, as it has hitherto been my not-unprosperous Task to Un-hood your Soul, I shall now make it my business to show her Game to fly at. I see that Love in *Lindamor* is too Noble and Predominant an Affection, to be either Easie or Fit to be destroy'd. It will therefore be my design not to Suppress your flame, but to Address it. I wish'd it withdrawn from *Hermione*, not to Annihilate it, but to Transfigure it. I would not have a Passion which wanted nothing, but a due Object, to be Seraphick Love; like vulgar men, be swallow'd up by Death, the common fate :

fate : But be ennobled by a destiny like that of *Enoch* and *Elias*, who having ceas'd to converse with Mortals, Dy'd not, but were Translated into Heaven.

Sett. 2.

What has been said already, *Linda-mor*, hath, it seemes, suffic'd to rectifie your Love; by Disabusing it, and showing you, how unfitly it was plac'd on its former Objects. Your proficiency in That, invites me to proceed with you to a new Lesson, and (mindfull of that true Saying of an Eminent Father, *Nemo aliquem amat, quem non vult esse meliorem*) to endeavour to exalt your passion by Directing and Settling it upon an Object, the due Contemplation of whose Loveliness may cure as perfectly all hurts received from any Mortal Beauty, as antiently the Sight of the Mysterious Serpent on the Pole did cure the hurts the fiery Serpent's gave. For, since to gaze stedfastly on an outward Beauty, where all your looking will but discover the same face, is found so effectual to Kindle or to Blow the fire of Love, (which the Greeks prettily enough express by their ἐν τῷ ὁρᾶν γίγεται τὸ ἐρᾶν) how much must a due Contemplation enamour us of that Divine, and, though Refulgent, yet ever more and more Discoverable

Numb. c.

21. v. 8, 9.

overable object, where Attention and
 Wonder still mutually excite and che-
 rish each other? Whence the zealous-
 est and perfectest Lovers of God are
 the glorious Angels, of whom our Sa-
 viour says, that in Heaven *they alwaies* Marth. 18:
behold the face of his Father which is in 20.
Heaven; and those blessed Saints, whose
 employment and whose happiness is, in
 the *Revelation*, exprest to be, *To follow* Rev. 14 4.
the Lamb whithersoever he goes. And
 those unblemish'd Persons are in that
 place recorded to have kept themselves
 Undeiled by mortal Beauties; to teach
 us, that the nearer and cleerer Intuition,
 that Heaven affords them of the glori-
 ous Object of their Passion, was, not
 the Cause of it, but the Recompence;
 and that whilst they liv'd Exiles here on
 Earth, 'twas such a speculation, as I am
 recommending (*Lindamor*) to You,
 wherewith they liv'd (to borrow the
 Expression used of *Moses*) *as seeing him* Heb. 11.
who is invisible; a Sight, whose Glory 27.
 made them look on fading Beauties,
 with as undazel'd and untroubl'd Eyes,
 as Eagles can be suppos'd to cast on
 Glo-worms when they have been new-
 ly gazing on the Sun.

To engage your Love, *Lindamor*, to *Self. 3.*
 this

this sublimest of Objects, I shall desire, that all that I have said to divert your former flames, and all that I may say to depreciate and discredit those degrading and disquieting Amours, that are wont to inveagle Mortals, may be look'd upon as meant, rather by way of Preparative, than of Motive, aiming but to Disabuse and Rectifie your mind, that with Compos'd and unprepossess'd thoughts you may judge of the Object I propose to you. Which to qualifie you to be but impartial to, this Method seem'd expedient ; being but imploy'd upon such a Score, as that on which the Platonists us'd to premise certain Virtues, which they (significantly enough) call'd Purgative, to dispose and fit the Mind for the Reception of sublimer truths. As Physicians to cleer the Sight are wont to purge the Head, that the Eye freed from all darkning and disguising Tinctures, may the more perfectly discern the objects presented to it. And certainly, the Love I would perswade, is of a nature, that makes nothing more conducive to it, than the greatest Uncloudedness of the Eye, and the perfectest Illustration of the Object : which is such, that the clearest Reason is the most advantageous

Light

Light it can desire to be seen by: You know the story of that witty Wench, who us'd merrily to wish her Lover all good Qualities but a good Understanding; for That, said she, would make them out of Love with me. The Divine Object to which I would Prefer you, *Liadamor*, is so far from being obnoxious to a Danger of that Nature, that I need not Disparage any other to Enamour you of this. For, the Creator is too full of Excellencies to need to be recommended or set off by the Creature's Defects. He was soverainly Lovely in Himself, before they had a being, nor has his giving us that Passion, call'd Love, made him the unsitter Object for it. To love God but because your Mistress has personal faults, is a greater, than any of those for which you have declin'd her; and is such a Solœcism in Seraphick Love, as it were in the Persian Religion, (for that has yet embracers in the East, as those, that have there convers'd with them, assure me) to make the Spots that blemish the Moon the Motives of their worshipping the Sun. *Hermione* is a Lady, so whose noble Relations I am too much a servant, not to have a Respect for Her; and I cannot,

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without

without concluding her an Extraordinary person, remember how lately she enjoy'd the honour of Captivating *Lindamor*; and though she has since by injuriously Declining, justly Forfeited the glorious Title of his Mistress; yet the Qualities, that gave it her, made me, among divers others, like her so well, that 'tis now my Quarrel to her, that she is not what she Was. And therefore, what ever may fall from my Pen to her disadvantage, relates to Her but as she was, or may again be, an Obstacle to your devotedness to Seraphick Love. To ingage you to which, (all this notwithstanding, *Lindamor*) I must do you the right to tell you, that God deserves the highest Elevation of your Love, though *Hermione* had not rejected it. Were she not only as Handsome as you fancy'd her, but as Constant as you wish'd her, her Beauty, and her Friendship too concurring, could not have made her other than, as Disadvantagious as Injurious, a Rival unto God; and, in the very Fruition of as obliging Returns as her Kindness could have made your Passion, she would have deserv'd but a more Moderate Degree of it. Angels, to whom Women were never false or cruel,

el, love their Maker above all things :
 and he to whom St. *John* presents his Rev 22. 4.
 Adoration, refused it for himself to di- & 19. 1.
 rect it unto God. Would not your self,
Lindamor, have thought your *Hermione*
 absolutely Handsome, though Moors
 had not worn the Devils Livery ; and
 the thing call'd Deformity, had been as
 much a stranger, as it is unwelcome to
 her sex ? 'Tis true, such is our frailty,
 that, As the *Israelites* needed a cruel and
 oppressive Bondage in *Egypt*, to make
 them resolve on returning to the Blessed
 Land of *Canaan* ; so oftentimes, the a-
 morous Soul needs the harsh Usage of
 a disdainfull Mistress, to disgust it with
 its thralldome, and make it aspire to its
 more genuine and satisfying Object. I
 may therefore allow *Hermione's* Defects
 to have given you Freedom and Occa-
 sion to consider the Prerogatives of Se-
 raphick Love : but I must not allow
 them to be the chief Motives of your
 embracing it. For, it were too injuri-
 ous to its glorious Object, to make that
 but the Refuge of a Defeated Passion ;
 whose Transcendency entitles it to more
 than the most Elevated and Entire one.
 Alas, God needs not these beggerly
 Parallels with any fading objects, to be-

come that of our disabus'd Devotion,
and He were Lovely Without compa-
rison, as well as He is so Above it. And
though I be not so unjust as to deny, that
there are Ladies (some of which I have
the happiness not to be unknown to my
self) whose Excellencies are capable to
ennoble their whole Sex : Yet their
greatest accomplishments compar'd to
His Perfections, whose gifts they are,
are, in that Eclipsing company, as in-
conspicuous as the faint Qualities of
more Ordinary persons. As when in a
clear Morning, the rising-Sun vouch-
safes to visit us, as well those Bright
Starrs that did adorn our Hemisphere,
as those Dark Shades that did Benight
it, vanish : Consonantly whereunto, give
me leave to observe to you, *Lindamor*,
that though divers of God's Attributes
are through his Goodness participated
by his Creatures, yet the Scripture makes
so vast a disparity betwixt the Excel-
lencies that it ascribes to Men, and the
same Perfections consider'd as they ex-
ist in God, that it seemes absolutely to
exclude Created Beings from any Ti-
tle to those Attributes ; because they
possess them but in a way so Inferior to
that transcendent, peculiar, and Divine
manner,

manner, in which they belong to God. Thus our Saviour says to him that (taking him but for a Man) call'd him good, *why callest thou me good?* There is Mar. 19. 16, 17. none good but One, (that is) God. Thus St. Paul calls God (or Christ) the only Potentate, *μόνος δυνατός*, though the Earth be shared by several Potentates; and even the devout *Eunuch* in the *Acts*, Acts. 8. 19. and the deposed *Grande*es mentioned Luk. 1. 52. by the Blessed Virgin in her Canticle, are, in the Original, styled Potentates. Thus, though there be Wise Virgins as well as Foolish; and though our Saviour Mar. 25. 5. tells us, That *the Children of this world are in their generation wiser than the Children of Light*: Yet St. Paul scruples not to term his Maker, *The onely wise God*; and thus he else-where 1 Tim. 1. 17. Para- phrases him, *He that onely hath immortality*, though Angels and human Souls 1 Tim. 6. 16. be Deathless. In so Incommunicable a manner does the Superiority of God's Nature make him possess those very Excellencies, which the diffusiveness of his Goodness makes him pleased to Communicate. I am the more zealous, *Lindamor*, to transfigure your Love into Devotion, (which I must desire you to look upon but as a vary'd name for

Seraphick Love) because I have observ'd your Passion to have been extreamly impatient of Confinement, and to have esteem'd what ever may be term'd Limits to be Prisons. Few therefore can Need more, or Deserve better, an Object for their Love, for which too immense a vastness were impossible. And such a one is God, whose Sovereign Perfections render him so incapable of being lov'd Too Much; that the most aspiring Passion can scarce arrive (so much, as) to Lessen its Disproportion to the Object. Other Passions, like other Rivers, are most lik'd, when they calmly flow within their wonted Banks: But of *Seraphick Love*, as of *Nilus*, the very Inundations might be desirable, and his Over-flowings make him the more welcome. For mortal Beauties, our passions are like our selves: If our Stature chance to exceed a certain size or Standart, it makes us Monstrous; but Devotion is like a flawless Diamond, where the Bigness taxes the Value, and the unusual Bulk both rates and enhances the Lustre and the Price. To give GOD All our Love is the greatest Command both of the Law and Gospel (in its capacious and teeming Womb, both

Com-

Comprising and Cherishing all the other Services God requires) and that there is not more exacted of us, is not, that an Addition were Culpable, but because it is Impossible. So noble is the nature of Devotion, that it admits of failings but by one of the Extreames, which is that of Defect. For, Mediocrity (whose office 'tis to restrain us from approaching the utmost Limits) which in other passions is an Excellence, is here an Imperfection. Or, at least, if Mediocrity be that which creates Passions Virtues, the Mediocrity of this Love must consist in the Boundlessness of it, since that is it which makes it most a Virtue. The Man after God's own heart is not afraid to own even to his Maker an ardency of Love for Him, which must be exprest by the significant Metaphor of Thirst; and that such a Thirst too, as makes the panting Hart (by Naturalists observed to be a very Dry Creature) bray (as I remember the Hebrew hath it) for those refreshing streams, whose want distresses and reduces her to an almost gasping condition: *My very Soul* (saith he) *thirsteth for God.* And we know that Thirst is not onely so violent an appetite, that it

Psal 42. 1.

Cervina

carosfica

est, &c.

Sennert.

Infi. De

Alimentor.

facultati-

bus. lib. 4.

part. 1. cap.

3.

vers. 2.

lessens the Wonder of that Monarch's Bargain, whom History records to have parted with his Kingdom for a Cup of water; But thirst doth so confine our Longings to what it craves, that nothing-else can satisfy them. The wealth of both the *Indies* would not excuse the want of a needed Cup, supposing their Possessor tormented with an Appetite, which cannot be quench'd but by drink. To which I must add, that the uneasiness of unrelieved Thirst, is not, like that of other inconveniences, lessen'd by Continuance, but grows by Lasting the more Unsupportable. The same inspired Poet scruples not also to profess so sensible and so active a Concern for Gods interests, that the zeal of Gods House had eaten him up; and hugely troubled he is, that others are not affected with the same zeal. *I beheld* (says he) *the transgressors, and was grieved, because they kept not thy word.* Nay, *Rivers of waters*, says he, *run down mine eyes, because they kept not thy Law*; and to manifest how much the tenderness and unreserv'dness of his Love, made him think those his friends or enemies, that were so to God.

Pl. 101. 6. *Mine eyes* (says he) *shall be upon the faithful of the Land, that they may dwell with me:*

Psal. 119.
158.

Ibidem v.
136.

Pl. 101. 6.

me: He that walketh perfect in the way, he shall serve me. Do not I hate them, O Lord, Psal. 139. 21, 22. that hate Thee, and am not I griev'd with those, that rise up against Thee? I hate them with a perfect hatred, I count them mine enemies. At this Rate did pious David love his Maker; but he was so far from thinking this Rate Excessive, that, transported by the sense of his Personal Disability to pay that Divine Object all the Love that his Perfections merited; he is not content to rouse up all his own faculties to praise God, (Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is Psal. 103. 1. within me bless his holy Name) but he invites all the Godly to assist him in the Payment of so vast a Debt; (Love the Lord all ye Saints, for, &c.) And again, Psal. 117. 1. (Praise the Lord, all ye Nations, praise him all ye people.) And not content, neither frequently to do this, as may Psal. 138. 2. appear by very many passages of his sacred Poems, he extends his Invitation to the Angels, and all the other Hosts of God, and concludes the Book of Psalms with a, *Let every thing that hath breath, praise the Lord. Hallelujah.* Ps. 136.

Nor does it invalidate what has now Sett. 4. been delivered, that some men have, even by Devout Persons, been blam'd for

for too much Devotion : for, it was not an excess of Love, but a want of Discretion, that was guilty of their faults; The Expressions of our Love to God ought to be regulated, not by our blind and wild Phancies, but by his revealed Will, (as Christ says, *If you love me, keep my Commandments*) and therefore it is very possible to be Too devout, not because any Expression of Seraphick Love can be made with too much Ardency, whilst 'tis consider'd abstractedly in it self, and irrelatively to the rest; But because that there being several duties of Love, which require an Ardency of it, 'tis injurious to exercise all that in one alone, or a few, that belongs equally to the neglected others. We must not (as too many Professors are now wont to do, of whose error you may receive a fuller account in some other Papers) dash in pieces the two Tables of the Law against one another; But must *so love GOD with all our hearts, as to love our Neighbour as our selves.* You know what our Saviour saith to the Pharisees, that Tithed Mint, and Cummin, with a neglect of Judgment, Mercy, and Faith, those weightier matters of the Law; *These ought you (saves) to have done,*

Mat. 23.
23.

done, and not to leave the other undone.
 And indeed this Partiality, *Lindamor*,
 which makes us display so much of the
 strength and vigour of our Spirits in
 some favourite-Duties, that we can but
 languidly and perfunctorily perform
 those others, we are less fond of; begets
 in Devotion a Disease, not unlike that
 new one in Children we call the *Rickets*,
 which some learned Physicians do not
 improbably conceive to arise from the
 Unequal Nutrition of the parts. For
 though none of them receive Excessive
 Nourishment, yet some of them receiv-
 ing as much as is convenient for them,
 and thereby growing up to their natu-
 ral bigness, whilst others are less nou-
 rish'd than (were the Body healthful)
 they would be, do grow so little, that
 the sounder parts seem Over-grown,
 and so the disproportion betwixt Them
 and the Ricketing ones makes the
 whole Body they compose mis-shapen
 and unwieldy. But, *Lindamor*, this
 proves not that we can love God too
 much, but onely that we may employ
 too much of that Love, in this or
 that way of expressing it. Whilst we
 are (as *Job* speaks) *Inhabitants of these* *Iob 4. 19.*
houses of clay, there are many Duties,
 which

1 Cor. 7.
32, 33, 34.

1 King.
19. 2.

which do as well challenge an Intensity of our affections; as those which relate more immediately to God. As *St. Paul* tells us, That there is difference betwixt married and single Persons, the affections of the one being at liberty, to devote themselves more undistractedly to God, whereas those of the other are distracted; (as *Adam's* were, betwixt his Maker and his Rib.) But, where a direct and immediate expression of Love to God defrauds not any other Duty, there it is free from the danger of Excess. Though Prayers may easily be too long, and Fasts grow exorbitant; yet *Christ* could spend the whole night in Prayer, and Fast forty days without immoderateness; when the other expressions of his Love to his Father, and the other exercises of his Mediatorial Function, were not thereby disturb'd, but further'd and promoted. And so *Elijah* might inculpably fast long, when that fasting did not disable him to prosecute his journey to the Mount of God; and though just men here on Earth must express their Love to their Master by (that busiey distracting, and remoter way of service) Trading with his Talents trusted to them; yet

yet when their devesture of Mortality
 dispenses them from those laborious and
 avocating duties to distressed Christians,
 and their own secular Relations, which
 are here requisite to be perform'd; their
 Glorifi'd spirits may now, without any
 Immoderate devotion, imploy, I say
 not, their Time, but their Eternity it
 self, in Converſing with God, and fol-
 lowing the Lamb whitherſoever he
 goes. And congruouſly I obſerve, that Rev. 4. 6,
 the four myſterious Beaſts, allow'd to 7.
 approach neareſt to the Throne of
 God, though their many wings, and
 more numerous eyes, intimate them of
 a very active nature, are repreſented to
 us in the Apocalypſe, as addicted but to
 one employment, ceasing *neither day nor*
night from ſaying, Holie, Holie, Holie, verſ. 8.
Lord God Almighty; and from giving
Glorie, and Honor, and Thanks unto him.
 And of *those that have whited their Robes*
in the blood of the Lamb, this account is
 in the ſame Book given us, that *they are* Rev. 7.
before the Throne of God, and ſerve Him 14, 15.
day and night in his Temple. So true is
 it, that no Degree of Seraphick Love
 can be Exceſſive, nay, nor any Expres-
 ſion of it Immoderate, unleſs it be made
 ſo, not by its Greatneſs, but by its Uſur-
 pation,

pation, whereby it either ingrosses or invades what belongs to its injur'd and languishing Associates. Our Love unto the Creatures is a Present, but unto God it is a Tribute: and though we may easily play the Prodigals in parting (over-freely) with our Gifts, we can scarce be so in the payment of our Debts; for, be the Summs never so vast we pay away, their being Due, in spite of their being Great, makes the Disbursement too much an Act of Justice, to be one of Profuseness. *Seraphick Love*, (whose Passionateness is its best Complexion) has then most approach'd its noblest measure, when it can least be measur'd: nor ought its Extent to admit any other Limits than an utter Disability to exceed those that terminate it. For he alone loves God as much as he Ought, that loving Him as much as he Can, strives to repair the deplor'd imperfection of that love, with an extreme Regret to find his Love no Greater. Such a sublimity of love will best entitle you to the Consolation accruing from that memorable passage of *St. John*, where he says, that *God is Love, and he that dwelleth in Love dwelleth in God, and God in him*. Which supplies me with a forcible

1 Ioh. 4.
16.

forcible Inducement, to invite you to an eager aspiring to a Transcendency in Devotion, since it may render Self-denial so easie, that it will (at last) almost divest that name. For, this sublimer love being, by an intimate conjunction With its Object, wholly devoted To it, and thoroughly refined from all base Dross of selfishness and interest, nobly begets a most strict Union of our wills with God's, or (rather) a perfect Submission of the one to the other. And thus, when it is become Your Will to obey His, no dispensations of Providence will immoderately disquiet you, for, you possess your Wishes in General, and in Bulk, though possibly not always in Retail. For, your chiefest Desire being to see your Maker's Will fulfill'd, your knowledge of his being the Sovrain and uncontroll'd Disposer of the Events, assures you, that all Accidents that can befall you are, but exact Accomplishments of His Will, and consequently of Yours so far forth, as that is included and compriz'd in His. When you have Resign'd, or rather Consign'd, your expropriated Will (if I may so call it) to God, and thereby (as it were) entrusted him to Will for you; all

all his Disposals of, and his Dispensations towards you, are, in effect, the Acts of your own Will; with the advantage of their being Directed and Specified by Him. An Advantage that does at once assure you both of their Rectitude and Success. God's Wisdom, Power, and Love to you consider'd, how much more happy must you be in your Options of his chusing for you, than your immediate own? The Patient thinks himself obliged to gratifie his Physician for chusing for him what sorts of meat he is to feed on; though the Doctor be wont to make such a choice for him, as deprives him of the Dishes he best Likes, and oftentimes confines him to those he Loathes. Alas, how often might God say of our Requests, as Christ did of those of the two aspiring Disciples, *Ye know not what ye ask?* I admire, and blush to read in an Heathen Saryrist so Heavenly a Lesson, as,

*Permites ipsis expendere Numinibus,
quid*

Conveniat nobis, rebusque sit utile no-
stris:

Nam pro Fecundis Utilia quaeque da-
bunt Di,

Charior

*Charior est illis homo, quam sibi : nos
animorum*

*Impulsu, & cæca pravaque cupidine
ducti,*

*Conjugium petimus partumque uxoris ;
at illis*

*Notum, qui pueri, qualisque futura sit
uxor.*

Unto the wiser Gods the care per-
mit,

Of what's for us and our affairs most
Fit.

They will for Pleasant things the Best
confer ;

To whom Man is, than to himself,
more dear.

We by our blinder passions led a-
stray,

Do for a Wife perhaps or Children
pray :

Which they may chance refuse us
out of Love,

Knowing what both the Wife and
Boys would prove.

The consideration of which made a
Heathen Philosopher say, That he was

wont onely in general terms to beg
Good things of the gods, leaving it to

E them

Gen 35.
18.Num. 11.
33.

them: to determine what things were Good for him. And indeed, our own Wishes are but too commonly as blind as *Rachel's*, who having so eagerly longed for Children, that she impatiently cries, *Give me Children or else I die*, died in Child-bearing: And as destructive to the Wishers, as their Longings prov'd to the murmuring *Israelites*, who loathing the wholesome Manna (that *Bread of Angels*) God had provided for them, ate their own bane in the flesh they had so greedily lusted for. Thus, *Lindamor*, that so-affrighting vertue of Self-denial proves to be little more, than a Sons Letter of Attorney to his Father, of whose paternal Kindness and consummate Abilities in the management of affairs, his confidence amounts unto a certainty. Nay, till my second thoughts check'd the over-forward Impetuosity of my first, I was about to add; Since God resents an Infinite satisfaction in the accomplishment of his own will, your Making over your whole will to God, will impart to you that Felicity, proportion'd to the degree of the Resignment. And, as the eye whilst by the Optick Nerve ty'd unto the head, so shan'd can taste delights, which it is

dead

dead to, being once sever'd from it, though (otherwise) it enjoy the best Condition of which its inanimate Nature can be suppos'd to be capable: So may your will by an Identity or Sameness (in Tendency, though not in Nature) with your Makers, as 'twere Engrafted into Gods, receive a New and an Enlarg'd capacity, which will enable you to contain, and relish Joys, highly transcending those, which the fullest fruition of your private wishes were able to Create. Thus Self-denial is a kind of holy Association with God, and (by making you his partner) interesses you in all his happiness, and acquisitions. And consonantly we see that Glorifi'd Saints and Blessed Angels, whose will have the most exquisite and exact Conformity to Gods, enjoy a Happiness most approaching His; whereas the Apostate Spirits in a confirm'd Repugnancy to his will, find the extremity of Wretchedness.

But though I dare not own, *Lindamor, Self. 5.* so bold a Sally, yet I dare without Scruple improve the discourse that preceded it, to make out to you an advantageous Difference of *Seraphick Love* from Ordinary Flames. For, he that makes

a present of his heart to any Mortal Beauty, even by her welcoming it and lodging it with her own, grows subject to have it wounded in her breast. Those misfortunes reach Him that would otherwise terminate in Her : her afflictions torment him, whilst his own reprieve him ; and the Felicity of two persons grows requisite to make one Happy. The letting out our Love to mutable Objects, doth but Inlarge our hearts, and make them the wider Marks for fortune, and capable of being wounded in more places : For, although Love may as well make us participate the Joys, as resent the Infelicities of the Parties lov'd ; yet even the least unhappy persons do in so fickle and so tempestuous a Sea as we all find this World, meet with so many more either Cross winds or stormy Gusts, than prosperous Gales ; and we are so much more sensible of Pain than Pleasure (an akeing-Corn, though less than a Sicknes, unfitting us to relish the otherwise perfect health of the whole body) that even Friendship itself, though a much Calmer affection than Love, ought to be declin'd as injurious to our Quiet, did we consider it, but as a Partnership of Fortunes, not

an Exercise of Vertues. But he, whose wiser Love settles it self on God, is not only by the Immutable and even Essential happinels of that Adorable Object, secur'd from Participated intelicities; but finds his personal crosses and distresses sweetned by considering, that What he most loves is most Happy, and as able as willing in due time to make Him so. And though *Seraphick Love* makes us partake but God's Felicities, yet his Acceptance of it makes him resent Our Sorrows: *In all their afflictions* Esa. 63. 3. *he was afflicted*, saies the Prophet, of God, and of the *Israelites*. And so the Son of God (who is so much One with those that love him, that both he as the Head, and they as the Members, are somet mes, as making up One Body, call'd by One 1 Cor. 12. Name, Christ) though as high as Hea- ^{12.} ven above the reach of personal or immediate persecutions, calls out to *Saul* for an intention of harming those that lov'd him, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me*? And, to demonstrate the tenderness of this Compassion, the Prophet saies to the return'd *Israelites*, concerning God, *He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye*. Zach. 8. Nor is Gods Compassion like a Mistresses, a Grieving onely,

and an useleſs Pitty, whereby the ſuffering Lover is oftentimes leſs comforted as it proceeds from her Kindneſs, than afflicted becauſe it breeds her Diſquiet; But God's is a Compaſſion, though Active, yet Serene, and worthy of Himſelf, which without producing the Diſcompoſure, produces the Effects of the moſt ſenſible Pitty, by engaging him to a timely Relief and Reſcue: As that freſhly mention'd Expreſſion, *In all their afflictions he was afflicted*, is immediately follow'd by, *And the Angel of his preſence ſaved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them all the dayes of old.* Yes, this Pitty, for its not diſturbſing Gods Happineſs, enclines him not the leſs to expreſs a ſenſe of our Miſeries, and makes us find (to uſe a Scripture phraſe as I would render it) *χολῶν ἐς ἐννοίων* *Εὐνοίων*, *Grace for an opportune relief*; I ſay, with the Divine Writer, *an Opportune or Seasonable relief*; becauſe it comes not alwaies when it is moſt Deſired, but when it is moſt Fit; And when that is, he that hath at once all preſent, paſt, and future things in his Proſpect, is fitteſt to determine. Chriſts words to his Diſciples, (*It is not for you to know the*

Heb. 4. 16

Aq. 1. 7.

the Times or the Seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power) are applicable to more Cases than that which occasion'd them. The *Canaanitish* woman Mat 7.27. must put up a Refusal, and the reproachful name of a Dog, (which yet, by the way, was a Paraphrase commonly enough us'd by the Jews of the Heathen; and as such was understood by this The Text refers her extraction to Syrophenicia the same Region with Canaan. *Ελληνis, Gentile not Greek.*) The *Israelites* (comprising the Patriarchs their progenitors) were reduced to wait four hundred and thirty years ere they were introduced into the Promis'd Land; and during a great part of that long space of time, languish'd and groan'd under the heavy Burthens, and other as heavy Pressures, of the as cruelly as unsuccessfully politic *Egyptians*. St. Paul himself pray'd the Lord thrice for the removal of that rude *σκόλοꝝ τῆ σαρκὸς, Thorn in the flesh* (whatever that may mean.) Nay of the Blessed Virgin-Mother herself her Divine Son would not be found till the third day, though she sought him sorrowing. And *Lazarus*, to whom even during his sickness he vouchsafed (a Title to which all *Cesar's* were but *Triangles*) the style of Friend, (which embolden'd the pious *Mary* to Paraphrase him Joh. 11.2.

verf. 3.

Mal. 3. 3.

by a, *He whom thou lov'st*) was permitted not only to Lye a-dying, but to Dye; his Rescue being deferr'd till, it was, thought impossible; and, was so indeed to any less power than Omnipotence. Which manifests, that as no degree of Distress is unrelieveable by his Power, so no Extremity of it is inconsistent with his Compassion, no not with his Friendship. He whose Spirit inspired the Prophets, is in the last of them represented under the notion of a Refiner: and 'tis not the custom of Refiners to snatch the belov'd Metall out of the Fire, as soon as it feels the violence of that purifying Element, nay nor as soon as it is Melted by it, but they let it long endure the brunt of the active flames, acuated by exciting Blasts, till it have stood its due time in the fire, and there obtain'd its full Purity and Splendor. And I hope you will give one that converses with Furnaces, though he be no Pretender to the Philosophers Stone, leave to improve a Chymical Metaphor, and observe, that though in Afflictions, especially National or Publick Calamities, God oftentimes seems to make no distinction betwixt the Objects of his Compassion and those of his Fury, indiscriminately involving

involving them in the same Destiny ; yet his Pre-science and Intentions make a vast Difference, where his Inflictions do not seem to make Any : As, when on the same Test, and with the self-same Fire, we urge as well the Gold as the blended Lead or Antimony ; but with fore-knowing and designing such a disparity in the Events, as to Consume the Ignobler Minerals, or blow them off into Dross or Fumes, and make the Gold more Pure and full of Lustre.

It is true, *Lindamor*, and (not to be suspected of Partiality towards a Love which so little needs it, to be thought fit to be preferr'd before all other Passions) I shall acknowledge it, that the Happiness resulting from those many Prerogatives, I have endeavour'd to discover to you in a Transcendent degree of *Seraphick Love*, is moderated by (the Effects of that Sublimity) the Eager Desires it creates of a more compleat Fruition of its perfect and Divine Object. Such aspiring Sallies of the longing Soul made the languishing Spouse in the *Canticles* cry out, *Stay me with Flaggons, comfort me with Apples, for I am sick of Love.* Such made the ravish'd *Apostle* desire to return (for so I should rather translate *Phil. 1. 23* *Sect. 6.*

- * Luk. 12. I find it * elsewhere to signifie) and to be
 36. with Christ : and the Inspir'd Poet thus
 expresses his longings to the Blessed Ob-
 ject of them, *As the Hart panteth after the*
 Psal. 42. *water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee,*
 1, 2. *O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the*
living God : when shall I come and appear
before God ! But, Lindamor, it was fit, that
to elevate our thoughts and wishes to
Heaven, some peculiar and else-where
Incommunicable degrees of Joy, should
be reserv'd for us there. And 'tis a good
sign, and such as worldly Objects can-
not boast, when the Incompleatnesse of
our Seraphick Lover's happinesse in his
fruits, proceed not from their want
of Satisfactoriness, but his want of an
Entire Possession of Them: And let me
tell you, Lindamor, that even this uneasy
State of Separation, is sweetned with as
much allay, as is consistent with its being
a Grief. For, the Divine Evidence and
Teacher of Gods love, pronouncing a
Thirst after perfection to be a Title to it
 (according to those Scriptures, *Blessed*
are they that hunger and thirst after Righte-
ousness : for, they shall be satisfied. And,
 Mar. 5. 6. *Let him that is a thirst come, and whosoever*
 Rev. 22. *will let him take of the water of life freely)*
 17. *and*

and the Joyes of Heaven being so vast, that they diffuse their Nature to all the grounded Hopes men have to obtain them; each new Assurance is a new Degree of them, and is acceptable to our Hope, though uneasy to our Desires. And these Baitings at compleat Felicity should not be more unwelcome for the present Disquiet they suppose, than the Contrary for the Zeal they argue, and the Felicity they promise. For this production of the Spirit in our hearts may be justly termed, as the Spirit himself in Scripture is, *An earnest*; which though 2 Cor. 5. 5 by being such it confesses it self not to be the Entire summ, yet is not onely a Part of it, but a Pledge: And, *Linda-mor*, how Supportable is this thus-qualifi'd Allay of the Joyes of *Seraphick Love*, in comparison of the Disquiets and the Torments that are wont to attend Sensual Love? I shall not lose time to enumerate how many it is supposed to have sent to their Graves; because, though I find those Tragical Stories rise enough in Romances, yet I find them Rarities every where but in those Fabulous Composures; and though I have had the Curiosity to visit some of those warmer Regions, where the Flames of
Love

Love are thought to burn with more violence, yet (bating the Duels and the Pox) I remember not to have observ'd Love to have ever been the Death of any man : unless, speaking like Philosophers, who make Reason the Essential Constituent Form of a man, we will affirm, that Love by dethroning Reason, though it leave the Lover alive, doth kill the Man. But though I am loath to put so bad a Complement upon Mankind, as to say, That Love it wont to Destroy mens lives ; yet I think it would be no Calumny to say, It much Disquiets them. I could ask you, How long many a Lover must continue a Servant to purchase the Honour of being taken notice of to be so ? And I could recruit that Question with pretty store of others of the like nature, but that I suppose your Memory will save my Pen the labour of representing to you the Torments of Love, which they that Feel them, would little lesse justly than they do frequently style Martyrdoms, if the Greatness only, without the Cause and Object of Mens sufferings suffic'd to make them Martyrs. And though the Condition of Lovers be in Romances so dexterously and delightfully describ'd, that not only

only Sanguine Readers are transported, but even I my self have been surpris'd into Inclinations to Admire and Envy their Felicity ; yet when some I was concern'd for have been really concern'd and engag'd in such adventures, my Envy quickly turn'd into Pitty. For, the Repulses, the Regrets, the Jealousies, the Fears, the Absences, the Despairs, and the rest of the afflicting Disquiets of Lovers ; though in well-writ Romances they are soon read over by the diverted Peruser ; yet they are not so soon Weather'd out, nor so easily Supported by the Disconsolate Lover, whose infelicities, though they may be perhaps so handsomely deplored, as to Delight the Reader ; yet trust me, *Lindamor*, 'tis a much happier condition to be Free from misfortunes, than to be able to Complain Eloquently of them. And as I have with delight beheld a Storm excellently drawn by some rare Artists Pensil ; but when I was this Spring tost by the rude winds, that blew me out of *Holland*, I found a real Storm a very troublesome and uneasie thing : So the condition of a Lover, though drawn by a smooth Pen, it is wont strangely to affect and please us ; yet when

when men are really engaged in it, they find it full of hardships and disquiet. 'Tis a much better condition to be Look'd on, than Embrac'd; and Experience gives men of it much (sadder and) more unwelcom notions than Description did. Nor phancy, *Lindamor*, that the Troublesomnesse of your sufferings in Love proceeded but from their not being Acceptable to her for whom you endur'd them; for, had your Mistress crown'd them with Myrtle, and prov'd as kind to you as *Hymen* could have made her, yet, I fear, she could have Recompenc'd you but by Disabusing you, and could not have freed you from the Need of happinesse, but onely from a Mistake concerning it. For me-thinks, *Lindamor*, most of these Transitory Goods, that we are so fond of, may not unfitly be resembled to the Sensitive Plant, which you have admir'd at *Sion-Garden*; for, As, though we Gaze on it with Attention and Wonder, yet when we come to Touch it, the Coy delusive Plant immediately shrinks in its displayed leaves, and Contracts it self into a Form and Dimensions, disadvantageously differing from the former; which it again re-
covers

covers by degrees, when touch'd no longer: So these objects that charm us at a distance, and whilst gaz'd on with the eyes of Expectation and Desire; when a more immediate Possession hath put them into our Hands, their former lustre vanishes, and they appear quite differing things from what before they seem'd; though after Deprivation or Absence hath made us forget their Emptiness, and we be reduc'd to look upon them again at a Distance, they recover in most mens eyes their former Beauty, and are as capable as before to inveigle and delude us. I must add, *Lindamor*, that when I compare to the Sensitive Plant most of these Transitory things, that are flatter'd with the title of Goods, I do not out of that number except most Mistresses. For though I am no such enemy to Matrimony, as some (for want of understanding the Raillerie, I have sometimes us'd in ordinary discourse) are pleas'd to think me, and would not refuse you my Advice (though I would not so readily give you my Example) to turn Votary to *Hymen*; yet I have observ'd so few Happy Matches, and so many unfortunate ones; and have so rarely seen Men love their

their Wives at the rate they did, whilst they were their Mistresses, that I wonder not, that Legislators thought it necessary to make Marriages Indissoluble, to make them Lasting. And I cannot fitlier compare Marriage than to a Lottery; for in both, he that Ventures may Succeed, and may Miss, and if he draw a Prize, he hath a rich Return of his Venture: But in both Lotteries there lie pretty store of Blancks for every Prize. And for your particular, *Lindamor*, the world is much mistaken in both your humors, if *Hermione's* and yours be not so unsuitable, that (to make haste from so nice a Subject) had she justifi'd your expectation of her kindness, you would have possess'd the Person without possessing the Happiness you expected: And might have found your self as sensibly disappointed by her Grant as you were by her Change.

But I forget, *Lindamor*, that I resolv'd not to insist on Parallels, and therefore, instead of prosecuting the discourse my Pen has slipt into, concerning the advantages of *Seraphick*, compar'd with ordinary Love; I shall venture to encourage you to the Former,

mer, by showing you, that your past addictedness to the Later, may prove servicable to you in it: Yes, *Lindamer*, I shall not scruple to tell you, that your strong Passion for *Hermione* may not a little facilitate your Devotion, partly by breaking all the Chains, excepting one, that fastned your Affection to unsatisfying Object; and restrain'd it from soaring to the sublimest; and partly by exalting your Passion to a Height fit for *Seraphick* flames. For, Love hath this of Noble, that it makes us divest our selves of Selfishness, slight fortune, quiet, safety, honour, life, and all our own Concernments, when their coming into Competition with the Lov'd parties Interests, may render their sacrifice acceptable to her; and makes us think Goods or Ills deserve those names, but as they come to us From or Through Her. You could scarce have learn'd a better Lesson, even from a much better Master; for, Love having thus accusom'd you to (what is thought most difficult in that Virtue) the Acts of Self-denial, you need almost but Transfer your flames from an Inferior and Mistaken, to their True and Noblest Object, and you will have exalted and refined your Love into Devotion;

F

tion;

tion; to the latter of which, a sublime Elevation of the first is such a Disposition, as the having formerly by looser Airs and (perchance) wanton Songs, learn'd to Improve and to Command ones voice, is to the skill of Singing those devout Hymns and Heavenly Anthems, in which the Church-Militant seems ambitious to emulate the Triumphant, and Eccho back the solemn Praises and Hallelujahs of the Celestial Quire. And, as by Hunting, though (possibly) we follow but some poor fugitive Hare, or some such Trifling Game, we gain that Vigor, that Sufferance, and Agility, that fits us for the Toils and Military Hardships that are exacted in the pursuit of Glory, and of Empire: so though in Love (Devotions Prenticeship) the Courted Creature be often considerable enough, to make our Elections fit to be numbered among such as those that made Love be Painted Blind; yet in the Progress and Conduct of our Passion, we contract such disinterested and resign'd Habitudes, as, being preferr'd to serve Cœlestial Objects, do excellently quallifie us for Devotion. And, in effect, a fervent Love seems little else, than Devotion mis-address'd.

address, where our own very Expressions may serve to disabuse us; For, when you give your Mistress the Style of goddess, and talk of nothing to her, but Offering up of hearts, Adoring, Sacrifices, Martyrdoms; does not all this imply, that though it be Said to her, 'tis meant to a Divinity: which is so much the True and genuine Object of mens Love, that we cannot exalt that Passion for any Other, without investing it with the Notion and Attributes of God? As Children disclose the inbred kindnesse they have for those Persons, by calling the Babies they most doat upon by their dear Mothers, or lov'd Nurses Names.

And as *Aaron* and the revolting Jews, by justifying to themselves their Adoration of the Idols they had set up, by attributing the Title of God to what they ador'd, did tacitly acknowledge Adoration to be due onely to the Deity: so does a Lover by naming what he Worships, a Divinity, tacitly confesse the Deity to be the proper Object of that highest and peculiar strain of Worship.

Exod. 32:
vers 4, 5.
In the
latter of
which it
is expressly
said, that
the Feast
was pro-
claimed
To Jeho-
vab, the
peculiar
Name of
the true
God.

And this Truth, *Lindamor*, the very Fickleness of Lovers concurs to testi-
fie: for, what men call and think Incon-

stancy, is nothing but a Chase of Perfect
 Beauty ; which our Love fruitlessly
 follows , and seeks in Several Objects ,
 because he finds it not entire in Any
 One ; for , Creatures have but small
 and obscure fragments of it, which can-
 not Fix nor Satisfie an Appetite , born
 For, and (though unwillingly) aspiring
 Unto God : who is proclaim'd the true
 and proper Object of our Love, as well
 by Mens ficklenesse to Women , as the
 Angels constancy to Him. Just as the
 trembling restlesnesse of the Needle in
 any but the North Point of the Com-
 passe, proceeds from , and manifests its
 Inclination to the Pole ; its Passion for
 which, both its Wavering and its Rest
 bear equal witness to. That unsatis-
 fi'dnesse with transitory fruitions , that
 men deplore as the Unhappinesse of
 their Nature, is indeed the Privilege of
 it ; as 'tis the Prærogative of men not to
 care for, or be capable of being pleas'd
 with Whistles, Hobby-horses, and such
 fond Toys as Children doat upon , and
 make the sole Objects of their Desires
 and Joys. And by this you may, *Lin-*
clamor , in some degree imagine the un-
 imaginable Suavity, that the fixing of
 ones Love on God is able to blesse the
 Soul

Soul with ; since by so Indulgent a Father, and Competent a Judge, as God himself, the decree'd Uncontentingness of all other goods is thought richly repaired by its being but an Aptness to prove a Rise to our Love's settling there.

And hitherto, my dearest *Lindamor*, *Sect. 9.* I have endeavour'd to recommend unto you *Seraphick Love*, by mentioning some of its Properties, which seem to relate more to the Love it self, than to the divine Object of it. But I fear you'll think, I have too long entertain'd you with Considerations, which besides that they are not altogether the Importantest that belong to this Discourse, I have been by halte reduc'd to Pen in the unaccurate Order wherein they offer'd themselves to My thoughts, not the Method wherein I should have presented them to Yours.

And therefore, *Lindamor*, since the *Sect. 10.* Noblest and Supreme Motives to the Love of God consist in his own infinite Perfections and Prerogatives; and since the Properties of Gods Love to us do advantage us much more, (and consequently are likelier to endear Devotion to us) than those of ours to Him: The former not onely moving God to Kin-

dle in us, but to Cherish and Foment, and (if our own wilful extinction interpose not) to Crown the latter : For both these reasons, I say, *Lindamor*, I doubt not but you'll think it Seasonable for me to proceed to consider that Higher sort of Motives to Devotion, and to evince, that the several things which are wont most to Engage and Heighten our affections, do, in a peculiar and transcendent manner, Shine forth and Constellate in God. That, you know, which enamour'd you of *Hermione*, I need not prove to you to have been your supposing her full of Loveliness and Excellencies in her self; and your believing, that the Love she vouchsafed you was Great, Free, Constant, or Advantagious to you. And that All these properties do not onely eminently Exist, but illustriously Concur in God, and in his Love, I must now, *Lindamor*, (with strong desires of doing it Prosperously) attempt to manifest.

Scet. 11. First then, our highest Love is made God's due by the Excellency and Privilege of his Nature. But, trust me, *Lindamor*, when (necessitated by a Method exacted by the nature of this Discourse) I find my self engaged to say some-

thing by way of celebration of Gods Perfections: I am very sensible, I can but detract from what I desire to Praise, and must inevitably appear unable to speak Worthily of a Theme, to which even Seraphims themselves cannot do Right. And if, as the Scripture assures us, those things never fell under the Senses, nor entred the Thoughts of men, ^{1 Cor. 1.9} which God has reserv'd for those that love him; how Ineffable and Incomprehensible must those things be which he has reserv'd for Himself? the infinite Superiority of his Nature above all Created Beeings, placing a vast disparity betwixt his greatest communicated Vouchsafements, and his Boundlesse, and therefore to Creatures Incommunicable, Perfections.

Wonder not therefore, *Lindamor*, that my weak eyes dare not dwell long upon an Object, which they cannot steadfastly gaze on long without being dazl'd: And do not marvel that I scruple not to use seeming Hyperboles in the mention of Perfections, which make the highest Hyperboles but seeming ones: both God's Nature and his Word declaring him to be *exalted above all blessing and praise.* ^{Neb. 9.5.} If it were seasonable,

Lindamor, to entertain our selves but with those Attributes of God which are Legible or Conspicuous in the Creation, We might there discern the admirable Traces of such immense Power, such unsearchable Wisdom, and such exuberant Goodness, as may justly ravish us to an Amazement at them, rather than a bare Admiration of them. And I must needs acknowledge, *Lindamor*, that when with bold Telescopes I survey the Old and Newly discover'd Stars and Planets that adorn the upper Region of the World; and when with excellent Microscopes I discern in otherwise Invisible Objects the unimitable Subtily of Nature's curious Workmanship; and when, in a word, by the help of Anatomical Knives, and the light of Chymical Furnaces, I study the Book of Nature, and consult the Glosses of *Aristotle*, *Epicurus*, *Paracelsus*, *Harvey*, *Helmont*, and other learn'd Expositors of that Instructive Volume; I find my self oftentimes reduc'd to ex-

Pf 104 24. claim with the Psalmist, *How manifold are thy works, O Lord? in wisdom hast thou made them all!* And when I have been losing my self in admiration of what I Understand not but enough

to Admire, and not to Comprehend; I am often obliged to interrupt or break off my Enquiries, by applying to the Works of Gods Creation the Expression us'd by St. Paul of those of his Providence, *O the depth of the Riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways untraceable!* And Exclamations of this Nature may the attentive Consideration of any other of Gods Attributes deservedly produce. But having else-where treated of this Subject in a peculiar Discourse, I shall now, *Lindamor*, invite you to consider with me, how much You, and those that are Conscious to their having Virtue enough in themselves to make them prize it in Others, are in love with *Cato*, *Scipio*, and those other *Heroes*, that did Ennoble and almost Exceed Mankind, upon the bare knowledge of their Virtues; although from them we derive no Personal advantage (their Death having numerous ages preceded our Nativity.) Since then we pay so much disinterest Love to some few Faint and ill-refin'd Virtues that ne're did profit us: how much on such a Secre, and at that Rate, should we Love him, who so possesses all Perfections, that each of his Perfections is Infinite? Were you and I
our

Rom. 11.

33.

our own Creators, *Lindamor*, and wholly independent upon God, without either Need or Hope to taste his Bounty; his native Excellencies, and what he has done for Others, should surely Ravish us and Enamor us of Him. Though his Benefits to us did not entitle him to our Love, his Essence (the Source and onely Motive of those Benefits) would give him a Right to it; and though we ow'd him nought for what We are, we yet should owe him Love for what He is. He is that glorious Sun, From whom (as Beams) all created Perfections flow, and In whom they all concentre. To omit God's Sovrain Majesty (which places him so high, that but to own for him so Familiar and Levelling an affection as Love, much more to expect to be Relov'd by Him, were not the least sawcy Presumption man could be guilty of, did not his own Commands make it a Duty.) Not to insist on this, I say, Let us a while consider that proper and peculiar attractive of Love, his Loveliness; which is such, that, did we but once see it, all Creature-competitions (even we being Judges) would then be as Impossible as they are now Unjust. In the Fifth Evangelists Prophetick Vision, the Seraphims

them-

themselves (those glorious Ornaments of the Celestial Hierarchy) are represented as Covering their faces in God's presence, either Blushing at their Comparative Deformity, or Unable to Sustain the unequal'd Splendor of so Divine Brightness; whence perhaps it became of old the Jewish fashion (as some frequent Expressions in their Writers intimate) when they went to Pray, to Veil their heads and faces: (though now I have in their Synagogues seen them onely Cover their heads, not their faces, with those white Garments they wear at their publick Devotions.) And, *Lindamor*, if *Moses's* face by but a few days Converse with God, reflected such a Light as dazl'd mortal eyes; and if his swift Posts the Angels, when sent on Errands to us here on Earth, even when they may be suppos'd (if I may so speak) to wear their Travelling Cloathes, and stoop as much to our frailty in the Form, as the Region, they appear to us in; do, in spite of that darkning Condescension, so much Transcend all Objects here on Earth, that the Scripture often mentions, That even those that aspir'd to imitate their Virtues, were confounded at their Presence: And if, in this veiling Habit, they appear so glorious, that

Psal. 94. 9.

2 King. 2.
11.

Gen 24.
10---53.

that their thus disadvantage'd Beauty is made the Complement and Hyperbole of that Quality ; what may we , or rather what may we not , conclude of God himself, of whom the Scripture says , *He that planted the Ear shall he not hear ? he that formed the Eye shall he not see ?* That is , He that Imparts a Faculty or an Excellence to the Creature, shall not he himself much more eminently Possesse it ? And in effect , the most unblemish'd Created Beauties are but faint Shadows (or trullier, Foils) of His. Those drops of Prettiness scatteringly sprinkled amongst the Creatures were design'd to Dæfecate and Exalt our Conceptions , not to Inveagle or Detain our Passions ; for , God did ne're intend them to Terminate our Love, but onely by our Eyes to exalt our Faith above them , and by the Beauties our Sight can apprehend, to raise us to a Confidence, that there is in their Author more than we can either See or Comprehend. Like *Elijah's* fiery Chariots , though they be Pure and Bright, and consist of the Noblest and Glorionsst materials , they are meant by God but to carry us up to Him. And as the Patriarch's Steward was furnish'd with so sumptuous an Equipage to court *Rebecca* , not for himself , but for *Isaac* ;

Isaac; so all the Lovelineſſe imparted to
 the Creature is lent it, but to give us some
 more enlarg'd Conceptions of that vaſt
 Confluence and Immensity that exube-
 rates in God. To make the righteſt uſe of
 Fading Beauties, you muſt conſider God
 and them, as you were wont to do your
 Miſtreſſe's Picture and its Crystal Co-
 ver: where though that native Glaſſe
 were Pure and Lovely, and very richly
 edg'd; yet to gaze on it was not the
 Chiefeſt Buſineſſe of your Eye; nor did
 you in it Terminate your ſight, but gree-
 dily look Through and Beyond it, upon
 the adored Image that ſolid veil betraid.
 Me-thinks *Seraphick* and our common
Lovers behold Exterior Beauties with a
 Difference reſembling that, wherewith
 Children and Aſtronomers conſider *Galileo's*
Optick Glaſſes, (with one of which
Teſcopioes that I remember I ſaw at *Flo-*
rence, he merrily boaſted that he had,
Trovato la Corte a Giove) which the one
 prizes moſt for what they Appear; the
 other, for what they Discover. For Chil-
 dren contenting themſelves to wonder at
 the Length, and fall in love with the
 Workmanſhip and Gildings of the Tube,
 do thus but gaze upon them; whereas
 Aſtronomers Look Through them; and,
 ſcarce

scarce taking notice of the unusual Ornaments, or the Shape, employ them to find out unknown Lights in the Skie, and to descry in Heaven bright Stars, unseen before, and other Cœlestial Novelties and Beauties.

Se. 7. 12. I deny not, *Lindamor*, that God has been pleased to adorn some of his Creatures with Hints and Impresses, as well of his Loveliness as his other Excellencies; but they do much more faintly and imperfectly resemble Him, than the counterfeit Sun we sometimes see in a Cloud emulates the True one, by whose Refracted and Reflected Beams, some acute modern Naturalists suppose it to be produc'd. For though this Derivative Sun shine with a not-inconsiderable Lustre, comparatively to the rest of the dark Cloud it ennobles, yet is it not onely as much inferiour to the true Sun in Brightness, as in Height; but it enjoys alone a Precarious, Dependent, and almost Momentary Being, which often it loses in a very Short time, and never attains to preserve a very long one. And therefore to neglect that supreme Resplendency that shines in God, for those dimn Representations of it, that we so doat on in the Creature, is as præposterous and absurd,

lurd, as it were for a Persian to offer his
 Sacrifice to a Parhelion, (as the *Greeks*
 call that Meteor) instead of adoring the
 Sun. And certainly, *Lindamor*, if our
 dim sight, like that of the Prophets Ser-
 vant, who saw the Mountains near *Do-* 2 King. 6.
than covered with Horses and Chariots ^{27.}
 of Fire, were privileg'd to discern other-
 wise Invisible Objects, our ravish'd Eyes
 would behold Lovelineffe enough in God
 to make us incessantly exclaim in the Lan-
 guage of the Prophet, *How great is his* Zach. 9. 17
Goodness, and how great his Beauty! Agree-
 ably whereunto we may observe, That as
 the Load-stone doth attract most power-
 fully the brightest Needles, made of the
 purest Steel, and those that most approach
 it; so Angels, who of all Created Bee-
 ings enjoy the unclouded'st Light, and the
 most clear Knowledge of their Maker, do
 love him with a Constancy so fix'd, that
 in five thousand and some odd Centuries
 of years, (efflux since the Creation) they
 could never see any thing, either In God,
 or Out of Him, capable to seduce them to
 a Change. God's Lovelineffe (which is
 such, that the Eternal Fruition of himself
 Creates even His Fælicity) is like rare
 Musick, which though it do delight all its
 partakers, the Knowingest Artists still
 do

do highliest Value, and are most ravish'd with the Transports in produceth, being proportion'd to the degrees of the Skillfulness of its admirers. The Apostate Spirits indeed deserted their first Station, not frighted thence by any blemish they descry'd in God; but probably fell by a sawcy Affectation of a Parity, and (as Divines tell us) a Sacrilegious aspiring to Perfections, which they were criminally unable to behold, without wishing them their own. And for their present Separation from God, it is their Curse and Punishment. And I shall ingenuously confess to you, *Lindamor*, that by the advantageous Ideas I entertain'd of God's Perfections, I have been sometimes inclin'd to think, that

Exod. 33. the reason why God tells *Moses*, *Thou canst*
 20. *not see my face, for there shal no man see me &*
live, might be, that, (as Transcendent Objects destroy the Sense) so Lovely and Glorious a sight (whose Continuance shall make our Happiness in Heaven) would let in Joys, and would create Desires, too Mighty for frail Mortality to sustain. The ravish'd Soul being shown such Game as That, would bate so eagerly, that she would break those Leashes that tie her to the Body, (and thereby hinder her flight to that wish'd Union)

and

and the glad Heatt (too narrow a Receptacle for so much Joy) to make room for such Guests, would stretch unto a Rupture. Longing or Joy, have sometimes singly reach'd Degrees, that have made them Fatal; And why then should their Union in such Extremes be thought incapable of producing the like effect? Nor is it perchance more a Privilege of the next Life, that we shall then see God; than that we shall survive that glorious Sight; which is too dazzling an Object for Mortal Eyes, till (to use St. Paul's Expression) *our mortal shall have put on immortality*. But I must ^{1 Cor. 15. 54.} no longer lose my self in a Theme, on which it is so easie to speak Much, and so impossible to say Enough. if I be not very much mistaken, they are so, who presume to give us satisfactory Definitions of Gods Nature, which we may perhaps more safely Define by the Impossibility of its being accurately Defined. And I must confesse, I do the least expect the best Description of the Divine Nature, from those that are most forward to take upon them to Explicate it: For our Words being but the Representations of our Notions, and they being necessarily Finite, as our Being; few men are (me-thinks) more likely to be mistaken in the Nature of what's Infinite,

AG. 22
6, 11.

(and consequently of God's **Attributes**)
 than those that think Descriptions can
 comprize it. Nor will an Assiduity and
 Constancy of our Speculations herein re-
 lieve us; For too fix'd a Contemplation of
 Gods Essence does but the more confound
 us. As I remember, St. *Paul* tells the Jews,
 that he *could not see for the Glory of that*
light, that shon from Heaven about him at
 his Conversion. And this the famous *Simo-*
nides experimentally found, who being
 ask'd what God was, took a days time to
 consider of it; after, being call'd upon for
 his answer, he desir'd Two days longer to
 think upon it; and, when they were expir'd,
 demanded Four days longer; and so conti-
 nu'd a great while, each time Encreasing
 his Demands for Respite; till, being press'd
 to give an Account of such a Dilatory way
 of proceeding, he ingenuously acknow-
 ledg'd, that the longer he Consider'd Gods
 Nature, the lesse he Comprehended it.
 And indeed, Experience teacheth us, that
 they that gaze stedfastliest on the noon-
 days Sun, can least of all discern what it is,
 being rather Dazl'd than Instructed by so
 confounding an Object. Nor, is it onely
Lindamor, a task of too great Difficulty for
 a meer man, perfectly to Explicate that
 Incomprehensible Nature of God, to
 which

which nothing but his own Infinite Understanding can be adequate: but, methinks, even to Celebrate God's Perfections, cannot be soberly attempted without a very deep sense of a mans own Unworthinesse and Incapacity. For, the same Excellencies that furnish us with Praises, do transcend them. And the fruitfulness of the Subject may as well deterr, as invite our Pens; since, as we are sure we shall not want Theme, so we are certain we cannot Dignifie it. And for my part, *Lindamor*, though my Subject exacted of me the Praises I have endeavoured to ascribe to God, yet I should have thought it requisite rather to decline the Laws of Method, than be reduc'd to Derogate from what I would Extol: If the Necessity of Detracting from Gods Perfections were not equal to that of Mentioning them; and if that Necessity were not as Glorious to God, as greater Praises than we are able to ascribe him, could be. But, *Lindamor*, having thus done Right to my Method, though I could not to my Theme, I shall onely invite you to imitate with me those Persians, that adored the Sun, thought the light he lent them serv'd but to make the source of it admired, and not to Pry into his abstruse Essence with it. And though I might say

much more concerning Gods Perfections; I must henceforth think Silence the properest Language I can now employ; for 'tis Silence that best expresses our Wonder; and sure, Wonder is never more seasonable than when God is the Object; A prostrate Veneration being the safest Apprehension of Him that is Incomprehensible.

Señ 13. Having thus considered, *Lindamor*, how fit an Object God is of our highest Love, for what he is in Himself; let us now proceed to derive further proofs of the same Truth, from what he is to Us, (that your Gratitude may contend with your Reason, which shall most heighten your Devotion) and we shall find in the Vastnesse, Freeness, Dis-interestnesse, Constancy, and Advantagiousnesse of his Love to us, that more than All the Love we can Pay him, were but a little part of that we owe him.

But for the first Attribute, we have assign'd his Love (the Greatness of it) in being a General Property, diffused Through all the rest, and conspicuous in them, it requires now to be treated of apart.

We shall then proceed to the Freeness or unmeritedness of Gods love; To be
lieve

lieve which strangely Vast, we need but consider, that we so little could at first Deserve his Love, that he lov'd us even before we had a Being : And our Felicity, in his Degrees, preceded our Existence in this world. God lov'd you numerous ages before you Were ; and his Goodness is so entirely its own Motive, that even your Creation (since when alone you can pretend to merit his love) is the Effect of it. This Benefit alone were sufficient to render God the Object of our Love, though We were that of his Aversion. For (as the Persians ador'd the Sun even when it scorch'd them) we esteem our selves oblig'd to love and honour our Parents in spite of their being wicked and unkind, though they be but Gods Instruments in our Production, and made us what we were born, not Arbitrarily, but in virtue of his Ordination. But God, to confer on us, in the most excellent and endearing manner, the blessing promis'd to his ancient People, when he vouchsafed to assure them, that *he would love them* Hos. 14.4. freely, was pleas'd to love us, not onely when we were Not at all, but when we were his Enemies; *If when we were enemies* Rom. 5.10 (saith St. Paul) *we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, &c.* Our Inexistence

indeed was a Condition, wherein nothing in us was capable of being a Motive of Gods Love : but our Enmity proceeded further, and made us worthy of his Detestation ; as if his Love were nothing unlesse it Vanquish'd Obstacles, as well as Wanted Motives. This gave the Apostle a just cause to say, that *God (commen-*

Rom. 5. 8. detb his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us : That is, when we wanted all Motives to invite his Love, unlesse our very Want of them should pass for one. And how did God express his Love unto us ? Even by the Gift of the Son of his love ; *For God so loved the world*

Joh. 3. 16. (sayes the divine Token of his Love) that he gave his only begotten Son. And how did

Phil. 2. 6, 7, 8. that Son Love it ? He (sayes the Apostle) being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God ; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. That is, That he would love at no lesse Rate than Death ; and from the supereminence heighth of Glory, scop'd and abas'd himself to the sufferance of the extremest of Indignities, and Sunk himself to the bot-

tom of Abjectedness, to exalt our condition to the contrary Extreme. *He was* Isa. 53. 5. *wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed,* sayes the Prophet. *For ye know the* 2 Cor. 8. *grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be made rich,* sayes the Apostle. Men having displeased God, and consequently forfeited all Right and Natural Possibility to Happiness ; even whilst they compleated the Forlornnesse of their condition, by the Lethargy of not being sensible of it, and were as Carelesse to Seek means of Recovery, as they had been Unable to Devise them of themselves : Even then, his restless Love would never be at quiet, till it had set his Omniscience on work, to contrive Expedients, and find out a way to reconcile his Justice and his Mercy, in reconciling Sinners to Himself. And this mercifull Design, by the Incarnation of his Son, he prosecuted in a way so Worthy of Himself, and so Advantagious to Us, that our just wonder at it may keep us from having any, to find that, as *St. Peter* informs us, the very Angels (prompted, questionlesse, by a Religious Curiosity)

1 Pet. i.
12.

ardently desire to look into those Divine Mysteries. I find it horly disputed amongst Divines, (not onely betwixt the Socinians and the Orthodox; but betwixt Orthodox and Orthodox) Whether or no God could, without violating his Justice, have devised any other Course for the Expiation of Sin, than the Passion and Death of Christ. But, without venturing to Determine, whether or no God Could, to Redeem us, have chosen any Other way, We may safely think, that he Has chosen the most Obliging and most Endearing way; displaying in this Divine Manner of Rescuing us, the severest Justice, and the highest Mercy; the greatest Hatred of Sin, and the greatest Love to Sinners: Since by those unequall'd and unvaluable sufferings, to which he delivered up for us that Son, who is so near unto him, that he truly said, *I and the Father are one*, He at once manifested both how much he Hated Sin, which he so heavily punish'd in the Person he most Lov'd, (though that Surety but Adopted it, to free Men from the Insupportable vengeance of it) and How much he Lov'd Sinners, by giving up what he so Lov'd for a Ransome of those that were guilty of what he so Hated. And therefore our Saviour,

Ioh. 10. 30

viour, though he did such great things to
 satisfy the unbelieving and contumacious
 Jewes of his being their promis'd *Messiah*;
 would not Decline Death to convince
 them; And, though he had not seldom
 done so much to make himself the Object
 of their Faith, would not be invited from
 the Cross, though the chief Priests and
 Scribes themselves said at his Crucifixi-
 on, *Let him now come down from the Cross,* Mat. 23. 7.
and we will believe on him. And Christ, to
 convince the World of their unableness to
 emerge and recover out of that deep
 Abyss, wherein the Load of sin (which
 in Scripture is call'd *a weight*) had Pre- Heb. 12. 1.
 cipitated fall'n Man, came not into the
 World untill well nigh 4000. years of
 Sickness had made the Disease Desperate,
 and the Cure almost Hopelesse. So inve-
 terate an obstinacy at once widening the
 Distance betwixt God and Man, and pro-
 claiming the latters Disability to find by
 his own wisdom, Expedients of Re-
 union. Thus Christ heal'd and dispossest Mat. 9. 32.
 a dumb person, who was able to make
 entreaties but by the Disability of pro-
 nouncing them; and might truly say to
 the secure World, *I am found of them that* Isa. 65. 1.
sought me not. And when our Saviour
 Was come into the wretched World, of
 all

- all the numerous Miracles recorded in the Gospel, he scarce did any for his own private Relief. And to shew, that as he endured his Sorrows for our sakes, that *by his stripes we might be healed*; so were the Joys he tasted in Relation to Us. We read not (which is highly observable) in the whole Gospel that ever he rejoyc'd but once, and that was, when his return'd Disciples inform'd him, that they had *Victoriously chas'd Devils and diseases* out of *oppressed Mortals*, and that by his *Authority* men had been *dispossess'd* of both the Tempter and Punishment of Sin. He convers'd among his Contemporaries with Virtues, as well attesting what he was, as Prophecies or Miracles could do; and, to teach Man, how much he valu'd Him above those Creatures that man makes his Idols, he often altered and suspended the Course of Nature, for mans Instruction, or his Relief, and revers'd the Laws establish'd in the Universe, to engage Men to obey those of God, by doing Miracles so numerous and great, that the Jews Unbelief may be almost counted One. Yet
- Isa 53.5. *his stripes we might be healed*; so were the Joys he tasted in Relation to Us. We read not (which is highly observable) in the whole Gospel that ever he rejoyc'd but once, and that was, when his return'd Disciples inform'd him, that they had
- Luk. 10. *Victoriously chas'd Devils and diseases* out of *oppressed Mortals*, and that by his *Authority* men had been *dispossess'd* of both the Tempter and Punishment of Sin. He convers'd among his Contemporaries with Virtues, as well attesting what he was, as Prophecies or Miracles could do; and, to teach Man, how much he valu'd Him above those Creatures that man makes his Idols, he often altered and suspended the Course of Nature, for mans Instruction, or his Relief, and revers'd the Laws establish'd in the Universe, to engage Men to obey those of God, by doing Miracles so numerous and great, that the Jews Unbelief may be almost counted One. Yet
- Mat. 12. 24. *were those wonders wrought for a Generation that ascrib'd them to the Devil, and Return'd them with so unexemplifi'd an Ingratitude, that 'tis not the least of his wonders,*
- Mat. 3. 12. *were those wonders wrought for a Generation that ascrib'd them to the Devil, and Return'd them with so unexemplifi'd an Ingratitude, that 'tis not the least of his wonders,*

wonders that he would vouchsafe to work Any of them for such blasphemous wretches : who were indeed, as some of the Latter Jews have too truly styl'd Themselves, in relation to their Fathers, *(hometz ben ya-yin*, Vinegar the Child of Wine, a most degenerate Off-spring of holy Progenitors. He suffered so much for them, that made him do so, that he suffered the Addition of Misery of being thought to suffer Deservedly ; *And he was numbred* 1sa. 53. 12. *with the Transgressors.* And though he Liv'd as much a Miracle as any he Did, yet did his Condition sometimes appear so Despicable and Forlorn, that Men could not know his Deity but by his Goodnesse, which was too Infinite not to belong Incommunicably to God. And though 'twere once a saying of our Saviours, *Greater Love hath no man than this, that a man lay down* 1oh. 15. 13 *his life for his Friends ;* yet is not, what is said of the Love here mention'd, to be understood of Love Indefinitely or generally considered; but only of the single Acts or Expressions of a mans love to his friends Compar'd betwixt themselves. And so the alleg'd passage seems to mean but this, That among the single Acts of kindnesse to a mans friends, there is not any One more highly expressive of a real and

and sincere Love, than to part with ones Life for their sakes. This Text therefore would not be Indefinitely applyed to the affection of Love it self, as if it could not possibly be Greater than is requisite to make a man Content, or Willing to dye for his friends; for he that sacrifices besides his Life, his Fortune also, his Children, and his Reputation, does thereby expresse more love to them than he could do by parting with his Life only for them. And he that is forward to dye for those that Hate him, or, at least, know him not, discloses a more plentiful and exuberant stock of Love, than he that does the same Kindnesse but for those that Love him. And thus our Saviour would be understood, unlesse we would say, that he Out-practis'd what he Taught; for, he came to lay down his life even for his Enemies, and (like the kind Balsom-Tree, whose healing-wounds weep Sovereign Balm to cure those that made them) he refus'd not to dye for those that Kill'd him, and shed his blood for some of them that spilt it. And so little was his injur'd Love to the ungratefull World discourag'd or impair'd by the savage Entertainment he met with in it, that, after he had suffer'd from wretched men (for whose sakes he left Hea-

ven to become capable of suffering) such barbarous Indignities, as might have made bare Punishments appear Mercy, and even Cruelty it self seem no more than Justice ; when I say, to hope for so much as his Pardon were Presumption ; he was pleas'd to Create Confidence of no less than his Love, a Virtue. Nor think it, *Lindamor*, impertinent to our present Theme, that I insist so much on what Christ has Done and Suffer'd for us, since both he himself informs us, that *He and his Father are one* : *Jeh. 10. 30* and some of the Texts already mention'd *See also* *Joh. 14. v. 9, 10, 11.* have taught us, that 'twas an effect of God's love also to the World, that *He gave his only begotten Son to Redeem it ; and, Joh. 3. 16.* That *God commendeth his Love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ dyed for us.* *Rom. 5. 8.* Wherefore I shall without Scruple proceed to observe to you, That so Free is Christs dilection, that the grand condition of our Felicity is our Belief, that he is disposs'd to make us Happy ; on Terms, not only so Honorable to him, but so Advantagious to us, that, I was about to say, That possibly Faith it self would scarce be exacted as requisite to our Happinesse, but that the Condition does encrease the Benefit, by vouchsafing us bold and early Anticipations of it : For,
Faith

- Faith* being (as the Apostle rearms it) the
 Heb 11.1. *substance of things hoped for, and evidence*
 (or conviction) of things not seen, wafts our
 Joys to this side of the Grave, bows Hea-
 ven down to us, till our freed Spirits can
 soar up to Heaven ; and does us such a
 service, as the Jewish Spies did to their
 Country-men, by bringing them over to
 Numb. 13. This side *Jordan* into the Wildernesse;
 23, 27. some of the pleasant and Delicious Fruits
 of the blest Land of Promise. I said, *Linda-
 mor*, that Faith was the grand Condi-
 tion required in Gods free grant of Eter-
 nal Life. Not that I would ascribe any
 thing to a Lazy, Speculative, and Barren
 Faith, in opposition to that lively and
 Active one, which is called by the Apostle,
 Gal 5. 6. πίστις δι' ἀγαπῆς ἐνεργουμένη, *Faith operating by*
 Jam 1. 26. *Love*; since I am informed by St. James,
 that the Divorce of Faith and Works is
 as Destructive to Religion, as that of Soul
 and Body is to Life : But that I was wil-
 ling to mind you, that though true Faith
 Gen. 30. (which cries like *Rachel*, Give me (children
 or else I dye) be ever the pregnant Mother
 of good Works, yet are not those Works
 the Cause, but the Effects and Signs of
 Gods first Love to Men, (however after-
 ward the Children may Nurse their Pa-
 rents.) As, though the Needle's point-
 ing

ing at the Poles be, by being an Effect, an Argument of its having been Invigorated by the Loadstone, or received Influence from some other Magnetick Body ; yet is not that Respect unto the North the Cause, but the Operation of the Iron's being drawn by the attractive Mineral. *Thou art good, and doest good*, says the Psalmist to Psal. 119. his Maker. The greatnesse of his Good-^{63.}nesse is that which makes it Ours ; nor doth He do us good, because that We are good, but because He is liberally so ; as the Sun shines on Dunghils, not out of any Invitation his beams find there, but because it is his Nature to be diffusive of his Light. Yet with this difference, that whereas the Sun's Bounty, by being rather an Advantage to us than a Favour, deserves our Joy, and not our Thanks, because his Visits are made Designlesly, and without any particular Intention of addresse, (by such a bare necessity of Nature, as that which makes Springs flow out into Streams, when their Beds are too narrow to contain the renewed water that doth incessantly swell the exuberant Sources ;) God on the contrary, for being necessarily kind, is not lesse Freely or Obligingly so, to You or Me ; for, though some kind of Communicativenesse be
Essential

Essential to his Goodnesse, yet his Extension of it without Himself, and his Vouchsafing it to this or that particular Person, are purely Arbitrary. To omit his Love to the numberlesse Elect Angels; the strict Relations betwixt the Persons of the Blessed Trinity, supplying God with internal Objects, which imploy'd his Kindnesse before the Creation, and Himself being able to allow his Goodnesse the Extent of Infinity for its Diffusion. But (having glanc'd at this onely by the By) we may yet further admirably observe, That whereas men usually give freeliest where they have not given before, and make it both the Motive and the Excuse of their desistance from giving any more, That they have given already: Gods bounty hath a very different Method; for he uses to give, because he Hath given, and, that he May give. Consonantly to which, when the revolting *Israelites* had broken the Contents, whilst *Moses* was bringing them the Tables of the LAW, and had thereby provok'd the Incens'd Glvet of it to the thoughts of a suddain Extirpation of so Ingratefull and Rebellious a People, we may observe, That, whereas God, as unwilling to remember his former Goodnesse to them, speaking to *Moses*, calls them,

them, *Thy People which thou broughtest out* Exod. 32.
of the Land of Egypt: Moses, on the other ^{7.}
 side, to engage God to the New mercy of
 a Pardon, represents to God his Former
 mercy to them, and calls them *Gods People,*
 which *He brought forth out of the Land of* vers. 11.
Egypt, with great power, and with a mighty
hand. And so conspicuous in the Eternal
 Son was this property of the Mercifull Fa-
 ther, that when sick *Lazarus's* Sisters im-
 plored his Rescue for their expiring Bro-
 ther, the Motive they employ, and which
 Prosper'd their addresses, was, *Lord, be-*
hold, (not, he who loveth thee, but) *he* Ioh. 11. 3.
whom thou lovest, is sick. And as he takes
 the first Inducements of his Bounty from
 Himself ; so do his former Favours both
 lawite and give Rates to his succeeding
 Blessings. And there is reason for it :
 for his pure Love being all the Merit, by
 which Man can pretend to the Effects of
 his Bounty ; it is but just that the De-
 gree of his Love should Proport on those Fa-
 vours, which 'tis our only Title to; and that
 Gods Liberalty should as well afford
 Measures as Motives to it self.

Nor is Gods love lesse Dis-interest'd Self. 14.
 than Free. His grand Design upon us is
 but to make us Instruments and Partakers
 of His Glory, and to bring us to everlast-

H ing

ing Happinesse, by a Way that does as well elevate and dignifie our Nature ; as the Condition reserv'd for us will. His Method of saving us, if but comply'd with, Col. 1. 12. does here, as the Apostle speaks, *fit us for the Inheritance of the Saints in Light* ; We 2 Pet. 1. 4. being made (as St. Peter speaks) *Partakers of the Divine Nature, having escap'd the corruption that is in the world through Lust.*

So that those things, wherein the noblest of the Philosophers plac'd their Fælicity, serve but to Qualifie and Prepare Christians for that Higher Blessednesse that is reserv'd by God for those that love him ; and cannot but be heightened and endear'd by the Value, which Graces and Virtues had given men on Earth, for such a Noble and Rational kind of Happinesse, as is apportion'd to them in Heaven. What ends can he have upon us, whose Goodnesse and his Blessednesse are both Infinite ? He was unconceivably Happy (in his own Self-sufficiency) before the Creatures had a Being ; and sure that felicity that needed

----- *Quid enim immortalibus atque beatis, Gratia nostra queat largiri Emulmenti, Ut nostrâ quidquam causâ gerere aggrederentur? Lucret. ex Epic.*

not Themselves to be supreme, needs nothing that they can do. Nor was it his Indigence that forc'd him to make the World, thereby to make new Acquisi-

Acquisitions, but his Goodnesse, that prest him to Manifest, and to Impart his Glory; and the goods which he so over-flowingly abounds with. Witnesse his Suspension of the World's Creation, which certainly had had an earlier Date, were the Deity capable of Want, and the Creatures of Supplying it. St. Paul in his Epistle to Timothy, styles God, *Μακάριος*, 1 Tim. 1. which we translate, *The blessed God*, but 11. may perhaps more properly be rendred, *The happy God*: and else-where in the same 1 Tim. 6. Epistle he truly calls him *The Happy*, as 15. well as *Only Potentate*. God (sayes the Apostle) *that made the world and all Things therein, seeing that He is Lord of Heaven and Earth, dwelleth not, &c. As though He needed any thing, seeing that He giveth to all Life, and Breath, and all Things. And, In Him, we live, and move, and have our being.* And indeed, so coherent in the mind of a meer Man, that does but Consider and Understand the Import of his own Notions, is the belief of God's happinesse to that of His Being, that I remember the Epicurean, *Lucretius* himself, even in that impious passage, where he denies Divine Providence; and in a seeming, but injurious Complement, would, under the pretence of *Easing God of it*, Deprive Him

of the Government of the World ; does yet confesse, that the Divine Nature must necessarily enjoy a Supreme and endlesse Tranquillity, adding, (to bring this to our present purpose) that 'tis

-----*Privata dolore omni, privata periculis ;*

Ipsa suis pollens opibus, nihil indiga nostri.

Whereby he acknowledges,

That from all griefs and dangers of them freed,

Rich in itself it has of us no need.

Or, if you wil have him speak of the gods in the Plural, like a Heathen Poet, that

Far above griefs and danger, those blest Powers,

Rich in their Native Goods, need none of ours.

A much Nobler Poet tells us, That the
 Psal. 24. 1. *Earth is the Lords and the fulness thereof,*
the world and they that dwell therein ; Agreeably whereunto, that Great God that
 Prov. 26. *formed all things,* (as in our Translation
 10. *the Scripture calls him)* sayes in one of the
 Psalms,

Psalms, *If were hungry I would not tell thee* Ps. 50. 12
for the world is mine and the fulness thereof.

His Ubiquity excludes all wishes of Remove, by making his Essence incapable of Exclusion ; For, Whither should he desire to transport himself that is Every where, and can wish himself in no place where he is not already ? His sufficiency is such, that he can see no Goods, but what he Gives, or Hath (or rather both bestows and posseses) his Plenity being so unexhausted a Spring of goods, that his Liberality does lesse impoverish God, than the Suns light does him ; or imparted Knowledge impairs the Teachers Stock. And therefore, though St. James do very justly call God, *The Father of Lights*, who is the bellower of every good and every perfect Gift ; yet the *Friend of God*, (as the Scripture calls *Abraham*) and that Royal Priest, (whom the Writer to the Hebrews teaches us to have been so Illustrious a Type of Him, whom he calls *The high Priest of our profession*) do both of them in the same Chapter stile him, *The Possessor of Heaven and Earth*. No, no, God needs not beg From, or covet In the Creatures shallow streams, those goods, of which he not only Hath, but is the Source. Our greatest Services to our Creator must be

Jam. 1. 17.

Jam. 2. 23.

Heb. 7. per totum.

Heb. 3. 1.

Gen. 14. 15, 22.

to Discharge our selves, not to Advantage him, nor as thinking to add any thing to a Felicity, which were not Infinite, could it admit Encrease. Our highest Performances, though they be Dues, amount not unto Tributes, but are rather like those Pepper-corns of Rent which Free-holders pay, not with hope or with intent to Enrich their Land-lord, but to Acknowledg, that they hold all from him. When we admire the Sun, our Seeing of his light doth not Increase it, it makes it not Greater, but onely it makes it Ours; and when we turn away, or shut our eyes, that glorious Planet suffers no Eclipse, and is not at all darkned or impair'd, nor doth He thereby lose his light, but We: the easiness of the application requires, and excuses its Omission. *If thou sinnest* (says *Elihu* in *Job*) *what dost thou against him? if thou be righteous, what givest thou him? or what receiveth he of thine hand? Thy wickedness may hurt a man, as thou art, and thy righteousness may profit the son of man.* In effect, the wicked's spite against God is but like a mad-man's running his head against a wall, that leaves the Wall unshaken, but dashes his own Brains out. God *inhabits* a

1 Tim. 6. Felicity (as well as *Light*) *inaccessible* to all inferiour attempts: His soverain Tranquillity

Iob 35.
6, 7, 8.

1 Tim. 6.
16.

quillity is so sublimely plac'd, that 'tis above the reach of all Disquieting Impressions; and, like the Stars, that feel not the diseases their inauspicious Influence produces, He doth not Resent the torments he Inflicts. God's Justice is not less Essential to him than his Mercy; Witness that (the numbers of the Saints and the Reprobate consider'd) thousands fall sacrifices to the severer Attribute, for one that proves Capable of the milder. He said, *He would get himself honour upon Pharaoh and all his Host*, when he design'd their ruine in the Red-sea: and Moses said, *He hath triumphed gloriously in effecting it.* And in Ezekiel he says, *Behold I am against thee, O Sidon, and I will be glorifi'd in the midst of thee, and they shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall have executed my judgments in her, and shall be sanctifi'd in her.* Thus, when a Flash of Gods Indignation (kindled by that strange fire they presum'd to offer before him) had blasted the two presumptuous Sons of Aaron, God is said to have been sanctifi'd in them that come nigh him, and to have been glorifi'd before all the people; such eminent and exemplary Instances of Severity, manifesting him to be so Holy in his Law, and so Concern'd for them, that even the

Exod. 14.
17, 18.

Exod. 15.1

Ezek. 28.
22.

Levit. 10.

Heb. 12.
29.

Deut. 18.
63.

Lam. 3. 33

Isa. 28. 21.

Ministers of his Altars shall not violate them with Impunity, but find Him (what the Writer to the *Hebrews* calls him) *A consuming fire* ; Who will be Glorifi'd before all his people, either by the Obedience of those that approach him , or by their Destruction. So to Evidence, that God can derive Satisfaction as well from the Exercise of provoked Justice, as from that of his provoked Mercy ; the sacred Orator uses this remarkable *Antanacclasis* , *And it shall come to pass, that as the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good , and multiply you ; so will the Lord rejoyce over you to destroy you , and bring you to nought.* Thus ; though it be truly said of God by the Prophet *J remiah*, that *he doth not afflict willingly , nor grieve the children of men* : (and therefore the determined Consumption of the whole Land , which our Bibles English, *Gods work, his strange work*, other Translators read, *Opus alienum faum*) Yet when the sins of Incurable offenders are grown to that provoking Height, that his Mercy intercedes no more no avert or suspend the inflictions of his Justice ; then how much he can satisfie himself in Destroying those that Would not be Preserved, may be guess'd at by that formidable Expression in *Ezekiel* ; where having foretold what havock

havock the Sword, the Famine, and the Pestilence should make amongst the intratable and dispers'd *Israelites*, he adds (as a kind of ^{ΕΠΙΜΙΧΝ}) *Thus shall mine anger be accomplished, and I will cause my fury to rest upon them, and I will be comforted.* The Houlings of the Damned as well sound forth his Praises, as do the Hallelujahs of the Saints; they both do sing to him an everlasting Canticle of praise; onely in this great Confort of his whole Intelligent Creation, the designlesly conspiring Voices are as differing as the Conditions of the respective Singers. Hells darknesse doth as well contribute to God's Glory, as Heavens Eternal Splendor: as Shadows, judiciously plac'd, do no lesse praise the Painter, than do the livelier and brighter Colours. And as when the Earth doth send black, noisome, and sulphureous Exhalations up toward the Sky, alas, they reach not Heaven, nor discompose the Spheres; but all the Storms and Thunders they produce fall on that Globe they came from, and there do all their mischief: So, the wicked may Wrong God indeed, yet do they really Harm but themselves by all their greatest sins, which trouble him chiefly, but because they necessitate Him to punish them: for the transgressions that do most

Ezek. 13. 5

most Provoke God do him not the least Harm. An impious person may (as *Elshu* lately inform'd us) hurt a Man, as himself is, not that supremely blessed Deity ; the Result of whose Infinite Perfections is a resembling Happineſſe, which is as inseparable from Him as his Essence. Our offences may derogate from his Accessional Glory, not from his Essential Felicity ; or rather the most desperate sinners by their greatest Crimes, can but Change the Attribute they should bring honour to, and but oppose the glorifying of his Goodness, to occasion the glorifying of his Justice ; since he will be infallibly glorifi'd, soon or late, either by mens actions, or their sufferings ; by their Practice of Duties, or Punishment for Sin. Thus you see how little God is beholden to you for your Declining Hell : Nor will the score be very much encreas'd by your Addresses and Attempts for Heaven. *Can a man* (says *Eliphaz*) *be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself ? Is it any pleasure to the Almighty that thou art righteous ? or is it gain unto him that thou makest thy ways perfect ?* Congruously to which sense the Psalmist says, *My Goodnesse extendeth not to Thee ;* The fire that we kindle on Gods Altars heats and enlightens Us, but warms not

Iob 22.
3, 3.

Psal. 16. 2.

not Heaven at so distant a remove, nor is wanted in the Suns residence. We have all the Redolence of the Perfumes and Incense we burn upon his Altars, the Smoak doth vanish ere it can reach the Sky, and whilst 'tis undispers'd, but clouds, and but Obscures it. Alas, our Best Performances are as useles Services to God, as the Heirs bringing Wax to his departing Father is to him, which adds not any thing to the rich mans store, and is by him desir'd and accepted, onely to Seal away a Fortune to his Son. Though therefore it be true, that God is Pleas'd with our Performances, yet is that Welcome he vouchsafes to give them, so far from ennobling us by them to Requite his Love, that it encreases the Unrequitednesse of it; Since He is delighted with them, as they afford him just Rises to reward them. How far from Mercenary is then Gods Bounty! since he accepts our Acknowledgments of his former blessings (chiefly) to make them Opportunities of conferring fresh ones; as good old Isaac desir'd his Sons Venison, that from the Rellishing of that savoury Meat he might take an Opportunity to bless him.

Gen. 27. 4

And the better to discover how Disinterested Gods favours are, let us further consider, how little they are Requirable; for

Sect 15.

for we can give him nothing but his own, (nor, Heaven knows, all that neither); and both the Will & Power to serve Him are His, upon so just and many Scores, that we are unable to Retribute, unlesse we do Restore; and all the Duties we can pay our Maker are less properly Requitals than Restitutions. When *David* and his Officers had offer'd towards the Structure of that Magnificent Temple, which they seem'd Ambitious to make a Mansion inferior to Heaven onely; the King himself gave three thousand Talents of Gold, and seven of refin'd Silver; and the Heads of the People, five thousand Talents (besides ten thousand Drachms) of Gold, ten thousand Talents of Silver, eighteen thousand of Brass, and a hundred thousand of Iron, (a Treasure, of which I scarce remember to have read the like in any History) besides a number of all manner of Precious Stones, capable of impoverishing the very *Indies*: They perfum'd this noble and unequall'd Offering with a solemn Confession, which perhaps in Gods esteem was much more precious than It: *Thine, O Lord*, (says the Royal Prophet in the name of all) *is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in heaven and in earth is thine.*

1 Chron.
29.11--16.

thine. Thine is the Kingdom, O Lord, and
 thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches
 and honor come of thee, and thou reignest over
 all. And in thine hand is power and might,
 and in thine hand it is to make great, and to
 give strength unto all. Now therefore, our
 God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious
 Name. But who am I? and what is my people,
 that we should be able to offer so willingly after
 this sort? For all things come of thee, and of
 thine own have we given thee. For we are
 strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were
 all our Fathers. Our days on earth are as a
 shadow, and there is none abiding. O Lord
 our God, all this store that we have prepared
 to build thee an house, for thy holy Name,
 cometh of thine hand, and is all thine own.
 who (says the Apostle, in a Question that Rom. 11.
 imports its own Negative) hath first given ^{35, 36.}
 to him, and it shall be recompenced to him
 again? For of him, and through him, and to
 him are all things. Nay, even our Love
 itself (that poor mans Surety and Exche-
 quer, that doth pay all his Debts, by sup-
 plying him with the Prerogative to Coin
 his Desires and Wishes of an Arbitrary
 value) is here unable to discharge our
 Debts: our Love being too much the Ef-
 fect, to be capable of being the Recom-
 pence of God's. And surely, the Divine
 Amorist

1 Ioh. 4.
10.

1 Ioh. 4.
19.

Amorist had cause to say, that *herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us.* And, as the same Apostle else-where speaks, *We love him, because he first loved us.* If, in effect, we look upon the unworthy Contest, betwixt God's Mercies, and mortals Ingratitude, and but reflect upon the small Return of Love that the greatest Disbursements of His do usually bring home; we cannot but acknowledge (as *David* in the lately mention'd Scripture did) that our Loving God for his Favours is one of the greatest Favours that we love him for. So Unrequitable is God's Love, and so Insolvent are We, that that Love vastly improves the Benefit, by which alone we might have pretended to some ability of Retribution. And so unlimited is this Impotence of ours to recompence or repay God's Dilection, that it extends to, and fetters our very Wishes. For God enjoys an Affluence of Felicity, so perfect and entire, that even our Wishes can aim at nothing for him Worthy of him, unlesse instructed by what he already actually possesses. And the Sense of this same very Impotence, to some of the greatest Proficients in *Seraphick Love*, appears not the least uneasie Property of it. It grieves us sensibly, to see ourselves reduc'd to be
only

only Passive, and the Receivers in this Commerce. We would fain contribute something, and cannot always refrain from devoting our Wishes to encrease his Happinesse, to whom we owe all ours. And some holy Persons (particularly *St. Austin*) have by the Exuberance of their Gratitude and Devotion, been transported to make Wishes, and use Expressions, wherein their Affections had a greater share than their Reason, and which argued them much better to apprehend, How much God deserv'd of them, than How little he needed them. But, upon second thoughts, we shall find, that the Cause of our Grief ought to turn it into our Joy, since the Desires we would frame, aiming at Gods being infinitely happy, are all Fulfilled before they are Conceived, and that in the most Advantagious and Noblest way: For, could Gods happinesse admit Accession by our accomplish'd Wishes, there were then a possibility of his Wanting something to render it Compleat. And sure, 'tis a more Supreme felicity to be by Nature transcendently above All encrease of Blessednesse, than to receive the Greatest that men can Wish.

To proceed now to the Constancy of *Señ. 16.*
 God's Love: we cannot entertain of God
 any

- any Apprehensions, not altogether Unworthy of him, and criminally Injurious to him, without believing, That to think that he Can be Inconstant, is as great a Crime as 'twere a Misery to find him so. His Love is like his Essence, immutably Eternal, reaching from Everlasting to Everlasting, it preceded the Nativity of Time, and will survive its utmost Period and Obsequies. *Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end,* says the Evangelist: And when
- Joh. 13. 1. *St. James had told us, That every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights,* he adds, (to complete our Consolation) *with whom is no Variableness neither shadow of turning. Of his own will begat he us of the word of truth.* And, in effect, since God takes the Motives of his Love to us, from Himself, not from Us, the Unchangableness of his Nature seems strongly to infer that of his Charity, and our Happiness in it. For,
- Iam. 4. 17. *Mal. 3. 6. am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed,* says God by the last of his Prophets; and in *Jeremiah* he tells his people; *I have lov'd thee with an everlasting love.* And what God once said to the generous *Joshua*, *I will never leave thee nor forsake thee,* is by the Writer to
- Josh. 1. 5.

the Hebrews appli'd to Believers in general: Heb. 13 5.
 for the gifts and calling of God (says the Rom. 11.
 same Author else-where) are without re- 29.
 pentance. Nor do those Crosses that seem
 due to his Anger destroy the Immutabili-
 ty of his Love, since even that Anger is an
 Effect of it, proceeding from a Fatherly
 Impatience of seeing a Spot unw p'd off in
 the Face he loves too well to see a Ble-
 mish in it; and from his Desire to see his
 Child an Object fit for a larger Measure
 of his Kindnesse: as when we beat the
 dust out of a Suit we fancy, we strike not
 out of Anger, but onely to remove that
 which doth Sully it, and hinder us to
 take that Delight in it, which our fond-
 nesse would be pleased with a just Cause
 to find. *As many as I love, I rebuke and cha-* Rev. 3. 19.
stise, (says our Saviour.) And, *I know, O* Psal. 119.
Lord, (says the Psalmist) *that thy Judg-* 75.
ments are right, and that thou in faithfulnesse
hast afflicted me. The Furnace of Affliction
 being meant but to Refine us from our
 earthly drossinesse, and Soften us for the
 Impression of Gods own Stamp and
 Image. The great and merciful Architect
 of his Church, (whom not onely the Phi-
 losophers have styl'd, but the Scripture it
 self calls ΤΕΧΝΙΤΗΣ, an Artist or Artificer) Heb. 11.
 employs not on us the Hammer and the 10.
 I Chizzel,

Chizzel, with an intent to Wound or Mangle us, but only to Square and Fashion our hard and stubborn Hearts into such *living Stones*, as may both Grace and Strengthen his heavenly Structure. Nor is God onely thus Constant to his Love, but to his Loveliness. Our Female Beauties are usually as fickle in their Faces as their Minds, and more certainly in the former; because, though Casualties should spare them, Age brings in a Necessity of a Change, nay, a Decay; leaving our Doters upon Red and White incessantly perplex'd, by the incertainty both of the Continuance of their Mistresses Kindnesse, and of the Lasting of her Beauty, (both which are necessary to the *Amorist's* Joys and Quiet): for, sometimes, when the Mistresses humour doth not change so Much, as to prove guilty of the fault of Inconstancy, her face alters Enough to make her Lovers with Inconstancy no Fault; or, that she had committed it, that her Fickleness might afford them the Excuse of Imitation or Revenge. But, in Devotion, we are equally secure from both these Dangers. Since God nor doth desist from blessing us with His Love, nor ceases ever from deserving the Heighth of Ours. Nor is he onely constant in making us the Objects

jects of his Love, but also in bending and enclining us to make him the Object of our strongest Affections; so that he not onely persists in continuing to us both the Offer and the Value of his Love, but perseveres to give us a receptive Disposition to Welcome it to us, and reflect it up to Him. The want of such a Disposition lost *Adam Paradise*, and the Fall'n Angels Heaven; there being to the Object that must secure our Love such a Nature requisite in reference to our Affections, as Philosophers are pleas'd to ascribe to the worlds Centre in relation to Heavy Bodies, which, they teach us, that Magnetick Point has the double Faculty, not onely to Draw thither, but to Keep there. For so Un-toward and Crosse-grain'd are We, in point of our own Good, and so unfit to Procure, and ready to Desert, our own Felicity, that neither its Excellency is a sufficient Motive to carry our addresses to it, nor its possession a competent Tie to intercept in us all designs of Revolts and Divorces: but we must be used as peevish Children are, who (on the one side) when their mouthes are out of taste, and they refuse to take what is necessary for them, must have it not onely Offer'd them, but Forc'd upon them, and be (as it were)

Made to receive it; and who (on the other side) must be restrain'd from gadding, when the Beauty of the Mansions they live in cannot invite their Stay, but they would gladly leave the proudest Palaces Architecture can boast, to Run into the Street, and Dabble in the Kennel. All these three Properties of Divine Constancy are not ill Shadow'd in the operations of the Load-stone, (a Mineral in which I have made too many Experiments, not to be by you allow'd to make some Comparisons to it.) For, first, it never forsakes its Inclinations for the Steel; next, being united to it, it retains so constantly its Attractive Qualities, that it gives not the Needle any Motive of deserting it; and thirdly, it doth never rightly touch the amorous Steel, without leaving an Impression, which ever after disposes it to a Conversion to that Magnetick Posture, which best fits it to receive fresh Influences. To which, let me add this other Resemblance, betwixt God's work on Us, and the Load-stone's on the Iron, that the Kind Stone attracts a Needle to it, not to Advantage it self by that Union, but to Impart its Virtue to what it draws. Besides, Absence and Rivals, those frequent Ruiners of other Lovers happinesse, can threaten

threaten nothing of Formidable to Yours. For, Absence (which so divorces us from that which animates us, that Lovers do not so improperly style it Death, if Death be but the Separation of Soul and Body) by God's Ubiquity we are secured from; He is ever present With Us, or rather In Us. You that not long since so highly valu'd the Opportunities of Con- versing with your Mistressse for some few Moments, shall here find your Privileges improv'd to a Permission, nay, an Invitation, of entertaining the Object of your Love at all times. No hour renders your visits Unseasonable, nor no length Tedi- ous: he is rather welcomest to God that comes to him Oftnest, and stays with him Longest. What favours were vouchsaf'd to that antient Prophetesse, (who was likewise one of the first Evangelists) who for many years *departed not from the Tem- Luke 2.37,*
ple, but served God with Fastings and Prayers &c.
Night and Day, the beginning of St Luke's Gospel may inform you. The *midnight- Act. 6.35,*
Hymns of Paul and Silas did not onely not 26, &c.
 Disturb or Offend him they prais'd, but procur'd the visit of an Angel to bring them miraculous and unexpected Liberty, as a proof of the Acceptableness of their seemingly unseasonable Devotions. When

- Gen. 5. 22. *Enoch had walked with God* as many years
 23, 24. as the year has days, God was so far from
 being importun'd or Tir'd by that lasting
 Assiduity, that vouchsafing him an unex-
 amples Exemption from death, he was
 pleas'd by a new and a nearer Cut to Hea-
 ven, to admit him to a yet Closer, more
 Immediate, and more Undistracted Com-
 munion with himself. And when *Moses*
 Exod. 34. had spent no lesse than *forty days and forty*
 30. *nights* in Converſing (if I may use so Fa-
 miliar a term) with God in the Mount, he
 brought down thence instead of a Penance
 for his Importunity, so signal and radiant
 a Testimony of God's peculiar Favour,
 that his dazled Country-men were as
 much Disabled, as Invited to gaze on an
 Object of so much Wonder. And then,
 How proud do we see many Lovers of
 their Sufferings, when she but Knows of
 them for whom they are endured? But in
Seraphick Love, there is not the least good
 Wish, or privateſt Suffering, nay, not a
 whispering Sigh, or cloſer Thought, that
 ſilently Groans or Aspires in the Amo-
 rous Soul, but He both ſees and hears,
 Pl. 56. 8. that Puts his Servants *tears into his bottle*,
 Sweetning and Recompencing the greateſt
 Miſfortunes that his Love occasions, with
 ſuch Support and Joys, as hinder us to feel
 them,

them, and make them deserve a contrary
 name. Each amorous Soul may say to
 God with *David*, *Thou knowest my down-* Psal. 139
sitting, and my up-rising, thou understandest 2, 3.
my thoughts afar off, thou compassest my
path, and my lying down, and art acquainted
with all my ways. And Christ also himself
 has so attentive an Eye upon the amorous
 Soul, that he is held forth in the *Apocalypse*
 as telling the Ruler of the Church of *Smyr-*
na, I know thy works, & tribulation, & power- Rev. 2.
ty; And saying to the Angel of the Church 8, 9.
of Pergamus, I know thy works, and where thou
dwest, even where Satans seat is, and thou ver. 12, 13.
holdest fast my name, and hast not denyed my
faith, even in those days wherein Antipas
was my faithful Martyr, who was slain among
you, where Satan dwelleth. So that no en-
 dearing Circumstance of our Love escapes
 unobserv'd by Him, who has Done and
 Suffer'd so much to engage us to it. God
 remembers not our Endeavours to serve
 Him, the lesse, for Our having forgotten
 them. *When saw we thee any way distressed* Matth. 25.
and relieved thee? will be the Question 37, &c.
 those to whom Heaven it self will be at
 the last Day awarded, as having Mini-
 stered to their Redeemer. Those, that in
 Degenerate times, such as ours, *Linda-*
mor, did, like *Lot* in *Sodom*, mourn for
 Their

Their Sins, that mourned not for their
 Own, and condol'd among themselves the
 spreading Wickednesse of the times they
 liv'd in; though probably the dangers
 threatned them by the very Sinfulness
 they deplor'd, made them affect such Pri-
 vacies in their Conferences, as freed them
 from the Thoughts of being Over-heard;
 yet the Scripture informs us, (and 'tis a
 Comfortable as well as Memorable Pas-
 sage) that the Lord hearkned, and heard it,
 and a booke of remembrance was written before
 him, for them that feared the Lord, and that
 thought upon his Name. Then shall he return,
 and discern between the righteous and the
 wicked, between him that serveth God, and
 him that serveth him not. I know, says
 Christ (not onely to the Angel of Smyrna,
 but to each true Sufferer for Him) thy
 works, and tribulation, and poverty: Fear
 none of these things that thou shalt suffer. Be
 thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee
 a Crown of life. God is often pleas'd to ac-
 cept those good Thoughts and Intentions
 of his Servants, which never arrive at actu-
 al Performances. Though David built not
 the Temple he design'd, yet his Son, that
 did it, informs us, that God said unto him,
 Forasmuch as it was in thine heart to build an
 house for my Name, Thou hast well in that

Mal. 3. 16,
17.

Rev. 2. 9,
10.

2 Chron.
6. 6.

it was in thine heart, &c. And 'tis the Epi-
 phet our Saviour gives God, *Your Father* Mat. 6. 6.
which seeth in secret, &c. Nor need we fear
 our Rivals should Supplant us, since we
 can have none in Devotion whose Prayer
 and Endeavour it is not, that God would
 love us more. For his Love to You being
 (as the chiefest Merit) the strongest Mo-
 tive and Title unto theirs, they cannot but
 Wish him well whom God doth love so;
 and cannot Wish him better, than by im-
 ploring for him fresh Additions both of
 that Love of God, and grateful Disposi-
 tions to return it. Our Saviour assures us,
 that *there is Joy in the presence of the Angels* Luk 15.
of God over one sinner that repenteth. And 7, 10.
 the sole Hymn (except a Visionary one) I Luk. 2.
 find recorded of the Celestial Quire, was 13, 14.
 sung for a Blessing to Mankind, wherein
 (for ought I know) their Love and Sym-
 pathy alone concern'd them: *For unto us* Isa. 9. 6.
(men) the Child is born, and unto us the Son
is given. Who took not upon him the nature of Heb. 2. 16
Angels, but the seed of Abraham. So Noble
 and so Disinterress'd doth Divine Love
 make Ours, that there is nothing, besides
 the Object of that Love, that we love
 more than our Concurrents in it, per-
 chance our of a Gratitude to their assisting
 us, to pay a Debt (of Love and Praise)
 for

for which (alas !) we find our single selves
but too Insolvent.

Sect. 17. Perhaps I need not mind you, *Lindam*
that divers Passages of the foregoing Dis-
course, suppose the Truth of their Doc-
trine, who ascribe to God, in relation to
every man, an Eternal unchangable and
Inconditionate Decree of Election, of
Reprobation. Yet concerning the Con-
troversies betwixt the *Calvinists* and the
Remonstrants, about Prædestination, and the
coherent Doctrines, it were Improper to
give you here my sense. Those that are
truly Pious of either Party are perhaps
otherwise look'd on by God than by one
another, as Contending, which of Gods
Attributes should be most Respected; the
one seeming to Affirm irrelative Do-
crees, to magnifie his Goodnesse, and the
other to Deny them but to Secure the cre-
dit of his Justice. And even in Honouring
the same Attribute his Goodnesse, these
Adversaries seem Rivals, the one party
supposing it best Celebrated by believing
it so Irresistable, that to whomsoever 'tis
intended, he Cannot but be happy; and
th' other thinking it most Extoll'd by be-
ing believ'd so Universal, that it will make
Every man happy, if he pleases: the one
Party electing to honour Free-grace, by
assigning

assigning it (as to men) an unlimitedly-vast
 Extent; as the other does, by ascribing it an
 infallibly-victorious Degree. But though
 my haste, and the nature of my Theme
 make me decline the Controversies about
 Prædestination; yet since the Doctrine
 that maintains it is not only by almost all
 the rest of Mankind, but by the rest of the
 Protestant Churches themselves, (the *Lutherans*,
 and divers learn'd Divines of the
 Church of *England*) not only Rejected,
 but Detested as little Jesse than Blasphemous,
 (as indeed they that judge it an Error cannot
 but be tempted to think it a Dangerous one
 and of very pernicious Consequence, so far
 forth as its Sequels are permitted to have
 Influence on mens Practice) I think it not
 amiss to Advertise you, that the Doctrine of
 Prædestination is not necessary to Justifie the
 Freeness and the Greatness of Gods Love.
 For so conspicuous and Refulgent a Truth
 is that of Gods being the Author of mans
 Felicity, that the Dispute betwixt the *Calvinists*
 and *Arminians* is not so much concerning
 the Thing, as concerning the Manner of its
 being Proffer'd; the former affirming Grace
 to be Irresistably presented; the latter, though
 they deny it to be Irresistable, yet granting,
 not only that it is altogether

altogether Free and Undeserv'd, but also that the Proffer is made both with a Power enabling those to whom 'tis tender'd, to Accept it, and with such engaging Invitations, that man at his first Conversion need contribute nothing to his Felicity, but the not-wilfully Refusing it, and may more properly be said to owe it unto God, than the Begger to owe his Alms to his Reliever, though he open his hand to receive it, which he might have declin'd to do, he would have wilfully courted his own Prejudice. Christ paid a Ransome to Redeem us, 'tis true, and he is therefore call'd

2 Pet. 1. 1. *The Lord that bought us* : but it was God's free Goodnesse, both to provide us That Christ, and to accept of That Ransome, neither of which he was Oblig'd to do, and therefore, the Scripture ascribes it not to the Justice, but to the Love of God to

1oh. 3. 16, the world, that *He sent his only begotten Son to Redeem it* : and St. Paul in the same Text

Rom. 3. 24 tells us both, that *we are Justifi'd*, δωρεὰ τῇ αὐτοῦ χάριτι, *freely by his Grace*, and yet that it is, διὰ τῆς ἀπολυτρώσεως, *through the Redemption*, (purchas'd for a Ransome ; the Original word English'd Redemption, relating to the Price paid for the Redemning of Captives) *that is in Jesus Christ*. 'Tis confess'd on all hands, that Merit must

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e disclaim'd, and those that seem to ex-
 act something from God as a Due, ac-
 knowledge, that if his Promise did not,
 their Actions could not, make it so ; and
 that 'tis to his Mercy they owe the Right
 they have to confide in his Justice. St.
 Paul, who, having fought the good fight, ^{2 Tim. 4.}
 finish'd his course, and kept the Faith, ex- ^{vers. 7, 8.}
 ceived a Crown of Righteousness from the
 Lord, under the Notion of the Righteous
 Judge ; yet tells us, that *by Grace we are sa-* Eph. 2. 8.
ved, through faith, and that not of our selves,
it is the gift of God. Whole Promises,
 now they Are made us, allow us indeed to
 expect Heaven from his Justice ; but the
 making us those great and precious promises, ^{2 Pet. 1. 4.}
 as St. Peter justly styles them) must be ac-
 knowledg'd the pure Effect of his free and
 undeserved Goodness ; which to believe In-
 finite, we need but consider the Dispro-
 portion betwixt such a Recompence as E-
 ternal Glory, and the least Imperfect Per-
 formances of ours : which, though they
 needed not Pardon, could not at least
 challenge any Reward from Him, who,
 our Creator, has such a Right to exact
 of us what services he Pleases, without
 proposing us any Recompence, that our
 strictest obedience to all his Commands,
 could yet leave us to confesse our selves
 unprofitable

Luk. 17.
10.

unprofitable servants, who have done but what it was our Duty to do; and what if we had not done, we had given God, who had the Power, the Right and Provocation to punish us. And indeed, so conscious are men Generally, (if not Naturally) to their being beholding to God for their Felicity, that even those that mistake or oppose his Way of doing them good, will yet be sure to find out some Notion or other, under which they may conceive themselves God's Debtors for his Blessings. That the more sober sort of Romish Catholics themselves, ascribe not so much to Merit, (properly so call'd) nor so little to God's Grace, as the more Quarrellous Writers of their party have given the more Eager Disputants of ours occasion to reproach them; were perhaps no difficult task to manifest, if my haste would give me leave. That the *Arminians* own the Freeness and Unmeritedness of God's grace, the Remonstrants * Confession and Apology are very carefull to satisfy the World. And even the *Socinians*, (how prosperously I determine not) are not a little, or un-industriously solicitous to free their Erroneous Doctrine of Justification from the objected guilt of its tendency to draw the Imbracers of it to Sacrifice

* Especiall
Chap. 17.
Numb. 3, 6

their own Ness, and thank themselves for Hab. 1. 26. their Felicity. Which brings into my mind a passage that I lately read in one of the chief modern Upholders of that Sect, *Schlichtingius*; who is wont in my opinion, where his Subject will bear it, to discourse as Fairly and as Rationally as almost any Writer that I have met with of his Perswasion; and who labours to reconcile *Socinus* his Doctrine with the Freeness of Gods Grace, by Considerations, which, not to Injure him, I shall present you with in his own words.----- *Ad retundendam vero* (says he, disputing against the Learned *Meisnerus*) *arrogantiam justificationum, & ne dicant se meruisse Gratiam, non est necesse, servum in homine arbitrium inducere; non debet virtus tolli ut tollatur arrogantia. Sufficit, 1. Quod nec velle nec perficere possint, nisi Deus & voluntatem excitet & vires augeat. 2. Quod ea, quæ divinis adjuti viribus faciunt, nullo modo dignitate & pretio divinæ gratiæ respondeat, sed infinito intervallo ab ea absint.* Nay, though the Modern and Degenerate Jews be, upon the Score of being the great Patrons of mans Free-will, not causlessly esteem'd the great Oppugners of Gods Free-grace; yet both from their Famous Rabbi, and my learned Acquaintance, *Menasseh Ben Israel*,

Israel, and from divers others of their most eminent Writers, has the truth sometimes extorted Confessions, which though made upon Erroneous grounds, were not very far short of Orthodox. To which purpose I remember, that a Jewish professor of Hebrew, (who assisted me in my studies of that mysterious Tongue) being, as the rest of his Nation, an eager and peremptory Champion of Free-will, conceiv'd that even that Liberty, which to us seems least to Indebt men to their Creator, did transcendently Oblige him unto God. For, one day that we were privately and freely discoursing together of matters of Religion, he told me, he thought Men ow'd more to Gods Goodnesse, than the very Angels do. For said he, whereas God, without any good Work of theirs, but purely out of his Goodnesse, conferr'd on them that blest Condition they enjoy; by giving Man a Free-will, by the good Use of which he may Glorifie his Maker, when by Abusing it, 'tis in his power to Dishonour him, he allows Man that highest Satisfaction and Privilege, of Co-operating to his own Felicity.

Sect. 18. And now, *Lindamor*, we are arrived at the last Property, which qualifies God the fittest Object for our Love, which is, the

the *Advantageousness* of His to us both in the Present and the Future Life. And first, even in This World we owe God no less than All the Goods we possess. We owe him both VVhat we have, and That we are: for we may truly say of God with the Psalmist, *It is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves*: And we were not only in his hands, so like *Clay in the Potter's*, that he might have made us Any thing; but we were so purely that Negative, from whence we were extracted, that He (if he had pleased) for ever might have left us to our first Nothing. His Love is the Original and Fountain-blessing; all the rest are but as Pipes (and Instruments) to Convey it, and serve but to hand it to us. Your VVit wins you Applause, Your Industry heaps you up Treasures; be it granted. But who gave you that VVit? and did both Give and Prosper that boasted Industry? Certainly, God as much Gives us all the goods we Possesse, as he that gives a Begger a thousand Pounds, gives him the Cloaths, and Meat, and all the Dravery it helps him to. But besides these more obvious Presents of Gods Bounty, we enjoy other Effects of his Goodness, which though by the Customariness of their being possessed, they prove lesse Con-

Psal. 100.

ver. 3.

Ila. 64.

spicuous than the other, yet grow no lesse
 Priz'd, when the VVant or Losse of them
 makes us sensible of the true Value of
 them. Had I the leisure, *Lindamor*, to lead
 your Thoughts with me to the Gallies,
 and show you there those wretched Cap-
 tives, that are Chain'd to the Oars they
 rugg at, and though expos'd to all the Mi-
 series and Hardships of a tempestuous
 Sea, have oftentimes cause given them by
 their Barbarous Usage ashore, to fear the
 Ocean lesse than any Port save Death.
 Could I draw for you the Curtains of sick
 and dying men, and open to you that sad
 Scene, where some pine and languish a-
 way by Distempers, that deprive them of
 all the Joyes, Advantages, and (what is
 more considerable) Uses of Life, before
 they ease them of Life it self ; Others
 Breath rather than Live, perpetually Tor-
 mented either with their Diseases or Phy-
 sick to protract a wretched Life, upon
 terms that turn it into a Trouble : and
 Others struggling with the rude Pangs of
 Death, are yet perchance lesse tormented
 by Them, than by the sad Prospect of
 their Former Life, and the Remembrance
 of those Criminal pleasures, which yet
*perhaps less troubles them that they must now
 foregoe, than that they once enjoy'd them*

Should

Should I, *Lindamor*, bring you into Hospi-
 tals, and show you there the various shapes
 of Human Misery, and how many Souls,
 narrowly lodg'd (if I may so speak) in Sy-
 necdochical bodies, see their earthen Cotta-
 ges moulder away to Dust; those miserable
 persons by the losse of one Limb after ano-
 ther, surviving but Part of Themselves, and
 living to see themselves Dead and Buried
 by piece-meal. Should I, to dispatch, *Lin-
 damor*, show you all the several Companies
 of Mourners, that almost make up Mankind,
 and disclose to you how copious showrs of
 Tears do almost every where Water (not to
 say Over-flow) this Vale of Miseries; You
 would perchance see cause to think, that
 Gods Privative (if I may so speak) may con-
 tend with his Positive Favours; and that you
 owe little lesse for what you are Not, than
 for what you Are, to that discriminating
 Mercy of his, to which alone you owe your
 Exemption from miseries, as great as the
 Blessing it confers on you: For, *who maketh* 2 Cor. 4.7.
her to differ? is a Question that may be as-
 well ask'd in reference to our External, as
 to our Spiritual Condition. Which invites
 me to mind you, *Lindamor*, that you are yet
 more engag'd to Gods Love, for Protecting
 you from those gross Vices that Disfigure
 most mens minds, than from those lesse Dan-
 gerous,

Dangerous, though more Repented, Diseases that Distemper their Bodies.

2 Pet. 1.
18.

For, Ambition, Lust, Avarice, Revenge, and even that *vain Conversation* which young Gentlemen are generally pleas'd to think to be Innocent, are really more Formidable and pernicious Diseases and Calamities, than those that reduce men to take Physick, or thrust them into Hospitals. To evince the truth of which Paradox, I hope I shall not need to mind you of judging of the Dangerousness of Diseases by the Nobleness of the part affected, since I can tell you, that He that cannot err, seems daily to justify our Assertion, by inflicting Sicknesse and the sharpest outward Calamities on his own Dearest Children, to preserve them from the Contagion of Sin, or Cure them of the unfilial Habitudes of it. And therefore, since, when we see a tender Mother apply a painfull Caustick to the neck of her Favorite-Infant, threatned by the Apoplexie, we scruple not to conclude, that she thinks the trouble of an Issue an Evil inferior to Convulsion-fits: so when we see our Heavenly Father send Infirmities and Crosses to rescue those he Loves from the Contagion of the Dominion of Sin; we may safely conclude, he thinks Affliction a lesse Evil than Guilt, since he is too Wise and indulgent

Physician

Physician to Cure with a Remedy worse than the Disease. In the eighth of *Deuteronomy* there is a Caution given the *Israelites*, lest Prosperity (which is wont to be a kind of *Lethe*, that makes men Forget all, but their Enjoyments) should make any of them say in his heart, *My power and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth.* But (saith the Text) they shall remember the Lord their God: for it is he that giveth them power to get wealth. It is not the revolting *Israelites* only, of whose Ignorance of his Bounty God may complain as he did by the Prophet, by whom he said, *I taught Ephraim to go taking them by their arms, but they knew not that I healed them:* and there are but too many, of whom he might say, as he did by the same Prophet, *For she did not know that I gave her Corn and Wine, and Oyl, and multiply'd her Silver, and her Gold, which they prepar'd for Baal:* Therefore will I return and take away my Corn in the time thereof, and my Wine in the Season thereof; and will recover my wool and my Flax given to cover her Nakedness. And this will make way for the Design I had to recommend the Advantagiousness of Gods Love, by saying, That as for Spiritual Goods, he gives us in this life so rich an Earnest of expected Joys, that even the Earnest is a Stock large enough to subsist with

Comfort on, and really our-values and transcends all those Momentary Pleasures, it requires us to forsake, to keep up a Title to Eternal ones. But to particularize Gods mercies to us in this very life, would certainly take up a Considerable part of it. And yet the Love, God bears us, Dies not with us, nor doth (as mens Affections) either endure a Funeral in our Tombs, or survive only in an uselesse Grief (or an Esteem as bootless.) No, Gods love is so far from resembling the usual sort of friends, who, when they have accompanied us to the Grave, do There leave us ; that like the Angels, that carried

Luke 16.
22.

Lazarus's Soul to Abrahams bosome; its Office begins then most to Appear, when our dark eyes are Clos'd, and is then Truest to the beloved Soul, when she Forsakes the Body ; giving each blessed Saint cause to say of God, what *Naomi* did of *Boaz*, that *He hath not left off his kindness to the Living; and to the Dead.* Now, indeed (says our Savi-

Ruth 2.
20.

1 John 3.
1.

our's Favorite) *are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be : but we know, when he shall appear, we shall be like him.* This blest Expectance must be now my Theme, because the narrow Limits, which my Design hath plac'd to this Discourse, (of the Advantages accruing from Gods Love) will leave no more room untaken up by Heaven.

But,

But, *Lindamor*, before I proceed to set forth to you the Greatness of the Felicity reserv'd for us in Heaven, it will, I fear, be requisite to mind you of the Lawfulness of having an Eye on it. For many not undeservedly applauded Preachers, have of late been pleas'd to teach the people, that to Hope for Heaven is a Mercenary, Legal, and therefore Unfilial Affection. Indeed, to Hope for Heaven as Wages for Work perform'd, or by way of Merit, in the proper and strict Acceptation of that term, were a Presumption, to which none of the Divines, we dissent from, can be too much an Enemy, nor perhaps more so, than I am. But to take in Gods Blessings among the Motives of Loving God, is but to do as he did, who said, *I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice, and my supplications*; and to Look upon the Joys of Heaven, to Comfort and Support us in the Hardships and Losses to be undergon in our Journey thitherward, is to Imitate no worse a man than *Moses*, of whom it is said, that *he esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt*; for he had respect, or turn'd his Eye, (*& weſſete*) unto the recompence of the reward. It is indeed, *Lindamor*, a happy Frame of mind, to be able to love God purely for

Ps. 116. 1.

Heb. 11. 26

Himself, without any Glance at our own Advantages. But though I dare not deny, that it is possible to attain to so High and disinterress'd a kind of Love, yet I think, that that Excellency suppos'd to be Vouchsaf'd to some men, is not by the Scripture Exacted as a Duty from All men. Were all the recompence of Piety of a Worldly Nature, and to be Here receiv'd, the Actions invited to, by the Intuition of it, might passe for Mercenary. But when Heaven is chiefly hoped for, as it will admit us unto the fruition of God himself in Christ, and that the Other Joys expected there are so far from being of a Sensual or Worldly nature, that they are known not to be attainable, till by Death the Senses and Bodies themselves; and all the meerly Animal Faculties be abolish'd: for a Heaven so consider'd, I say, to Forgo readily all the Pleasures of the Senses, and Undergo cheerfully all the Hardships and Dangers that are wont to attend a Holy Life, is, *Lindamor*, such a kind of Mercenarineffe, as none, but a Resigned, Noble, and Believing Soul, is likely to be guilty of. If I should say, that Fear it self, and even the Fear of Hell, may be one Justifiable Motive of Mens Actions, though I should propose, what those I am reasoning with would think a Paradox; yet I should perhaps hold forth therein

therein no more than the Scripture does, *Let us therefore Fear* (says the Writer to the Hebrews) *lest a promise being left us of entering into his Rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.* And no lesse eminent a Herauld of the Gospel than St. Paul, who so successfully maintain'd the Evangelical against the Legal Spirit, thus professeth of himself, *I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest by any means, when I have preach'd to others, I myself should be a cast-away.* And 'twas not to Slaves or Hirelings, that Christ directs this Admonition, *I say unto you, my Friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the Body, and after that have no more that they can do: But I will forwarn you whom you shall fear, Fear him, which after he hath kill'd, hath power to cast into Hell; Yea, I say unto you, (a gemination, which the present Controversie shews not to have been Causelesse) Fear him.* Where the Paraphrase given of God, is not barely Descriptive but Ratiocinative, (to borrow those terms of the Schools) informing us, not onely Who we should, and should not fear, but Why we should fear the one and not the other. As when St. Paul says, *I know whom I have trusted,* he means what manner of person, *how Faithful* (as St. Peter else-where calls God) *and how omnipotent:* whence immediately he adds, *And I am perswaded, that*

1 Cor. 9.
27.

Luk. 12.
4, 5.

1 Pet. 4. 19.

2 Tim. 1.
be 12.

- he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.* More Texts of the same Import might be added, if the Design of those already alleg'd were other, than to Facilitate the Admission of the more Plausible truth we have been making out, and which to us seems very clearly held forth in those and the like Scriptures, which are therefore cited out of the New Testament, that they might have the greater Authority
- Phil. 3. 14. *with one sort of our Antagonists. I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the Tree of Life, and may enter in through the Gates into the City. Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold of eternal life.*
- Rev. 22. 14. *To them who by patient continuing in well-doing, seek for (ἐν τῷ) Glory, and Honour, and Immortality, Eternal life. And of Christ himself, whose Love to God is questionlesse Filial and unequalable, 'tis said, Look-
 Heb. 12. 22. *ing unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our Faith, who for the Joy that was set before him endured the Cross, despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. Nor see I why it should be Unfilial for a Child of God to further the Raising of those Passions, which his heavenly Father**

Father intends to have rais'd in him, upon the same Grounds and Motives, that God is pleas'd to imploy to Excite them. And since the Scripture seems plainly to invite our Hopes, by recording St. Paul's having said, *Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things; now they do it to obtain a corruptible Crown, but we an incorruptible:* And by representing our Saviour himself, as saying in one place, *Rejoyce, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in Heaven:* In another, *Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life.* And in divers others speaking to the like purpose; Since, I say, the Scripture seems thus to allure our Hopes, would it not be a kind of accusing it of an Aptnesse to delude and ensnare us, To teach, that it proposeth to us the powerfulllest Objects to Incite our Passions, if it be sinful to cherish and harbour the Passions naturally belonging to those Objects? And certainly, *Lindamor*, since God, who, as our Creator, knows the Frame and Constitution of mans Soul, incomparably better than he himself, is pleas'd to deal with our Hopes and our Fears, to engage us to his Service: it very ill becomes Us, either to quarrel with his Methods of working on our Spirits, or to reject any Help

1 Cor. 9.

25.

Mat. 5. 12.

Rev. 2. 10.

Help which he has been pleas'd to afford a Piery, which, for ought ever I could observe, does even in the best men find resistance enough to keep any Help that can be employed to promote it from being Superstitious. And truly, the Animating or Discouraging Influence; that Hope, or the Want of it, is wont to have upon our Endeavours, makes me very apprehensive, that since the Enlivening hopes of Heaven are not able to make most mens Endeavours other than very Languid, the forbidding those supporting hopes would soon Weaken and Decrease our Endeavours into none at all.

Sett. 20. But, *Lindamor*, though I may perhaps have taken some Pains in studying Controversal Divinity, yet I take so little pleasure in Writing of it, that though not onely a Seasonable Duty to truth, but a Necessary one to the ensuing part of this Discourse, have pressed me to serve in this cause; yet I shall perhaps obtain Your pardon sooner than my Own, for having thus long suspended the Discoursing to you of the *Advantageousness* of God's love to us, as it gives us Here a Right, and will Hereafter give us Admission to Heaven. Heaven, the bright seat of so much Happineffe, that we shall scarcely count amongst

amongst our Joys, that Heaven is the Seat of them. There the Excellency of the possessed Goods shall as much disappoint our Expectations, as in other fruiti-
 ons the Emptiness is wont to do. The Apostle tells us, that *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entred into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.* 1 Cor. 2. 9. Such pure refin'd Delights not onely stoop not unto Sense, but are sublime enough even to transcend Imagination. When Fancy hath form'd and shap'd the Perfectest Ideas, that its Abstractions can make, of Blessedness; our own more happy Experiences of greater, must disabuse us, when we come to Heaven; which is a Soyl, whose Fruitfulness is so confin'd to Joy, that even our Disappointments and Mistakes shall there contribute to our Happiness; which will so much partake of his Immensity, whose Gift it is, that you see the Apostle gives it a Negative Description: and to create in us Apprehensions underogatory from what we shall Possesse, not onely removes our thoughts From all we Do Enjoy, but Exalts them Above all that we Can Fancy. At which way of proceeding, that you may the lesse wonder, *Lipdamor*, be pleas'd to consider, that
 in

in Heaven our Faculties shall not onely be Gratifi'd with suitable and acceptable Objects, but shall be Heightned and Enlarg'd, and consequently our Capacities of Happinesse, as well Encreas'd as Fill'd. A Child not yet releas'd out of the homely Prison of the Womb, cannot there possibly frame Ideas of those delights, which will be afforded him by the pleasing Noises, and the glittering Objects, that will present themselves to him after his Birth. And the same Child, whilst he continues in his Nonage, though he may with Delight look upon Emblems finely Drawn and Painted, and may take some pleasure in beholding the neat and surprizing Characters and Flounishes of a Greek and Hebrew Bible curiously Printed; yet he cannot then imagine the Pleasure the same Objects will afford him, when Age and Study shall have ripen'd and instructed his Intellectuals, and made him capable both of Understanding, and Relishing the excellent Moralities, couch'd in those ingenious Emblems, and the profound and saving Mysteries wherewith that Divine Book the Scripture, (especially in its Original Tongues) does to an Intelligent and Religious Peruser, appear Replenish'd. Such a double advantage, *Lindamar*, among others,

others, the Admission into Heaven brings those, to whom that Blessing is vouchsaf'd: For, besides that Set of Objects, (if I may so speak) so New and so Peculiar to Heaven, that their Ideas could never enter into mens thoughts before their Admission there; besides this, I say, our then enlarg'd Capacities will enable us, even in Objects which were not altogether Unknown to us before, to perceive things formerly Undiscern'd, and derive thence both New and Greater Satisfactions and Delights. Wonder not, *Lindamor*, that in mentioning the Joys of Heaven, I use the Expressions I find least Detractory from a Theme, as much above our Praises, as the Heaven they are enjoy'd in is above our Heads. For, though such Expressions may seem somewhat Tumid and Aspiring, and fitter much for one that Celebrates, than for one that but Asserts: yet cannot I scruple to use Seeming Hyperboles in the mention of Felicities, which make the highest Hyperboles but Seeming ones. For these Joys, *Lindamor*, of Heaven, are like its Stars, which by reason of our Remoteness from them appear extremely Little, though really in themselves they are so Vast, that a lesse than the largest is by Odds Greater than the biggest

biggest Object upon Earth, nay, than the whole Earth it self. And therefore, as if I were to take you with me to contemplate the Planets, I would show you them through such a Telescope, as by greatness those bright Objects in comparison of what, to the unassisted Eye they appear, doth somewhat lessen the Disadvantage of Remoteness, and shows them with lesse Detraction from their true Magnitude; so mentioning to you the Felicities of Heaven, I think it not Unlawful or Improper to endeavour by Representations, transcending what they Appear, to give you Notions lesse inferiour to what they Are.

Sect. 21. In Heaven, then, we shall taste Happiness enough, to enable us to rectifie the Definition of it. We may there be instructed how to Name and Rate all Goods by those that will Concenter into the Felicity we shall possess, which shall be there made up of the Confluence, Perfection, and Perpetuity of all true Joys. For, Heaven will make us happy, not (as Philosophy pretends to do) by the Confinement, but by the Fruition of our Desires: which shall neither Fail in the Choice of their Objects, nor Misse of the Enjoyment of them; but be, both unceasingly

ringly Just, and infallibly Accomplish'd :
 In the former of which properties, (as our
 then Rectifi'd Reason will consider things)
 we shall think our selves happier (yet) than
 in the latter. We shall there Resemble
 the Saints we here Admire, and shall not
 onely See and be Like those pious Wor-
 thies, whose virtues Eclipse theirs, which
 among the Heathen Deifi'd lesse deserving
 Heroes ; those excellent Persons. that did as
 well Ennoble as Instruct Mankind, giving
 us cause to Glory, and to Blush that we
 are Men, and whose Stories have the un-
 parallel'd Honour of being recorded by In-
 spired Pens ; Those *Spirits*, I say, of just Heb. 12.
men made perfect, as the Scripture terms ^{23.}
 them, shall be our constant and familiar
 Company, into whose blessed Society we
 shall not onely be Welcome, but Encrease
 it. In Heaven, we shall have a blest and
 familiar Conversation with those same glo-
 rious Spirits, whose Nature doth invest
 them with such a Lustre, that all the Dis-
 advantage of their Disguizes, when they
 Appear to us, doth scarce suffice to con-
 fine our Raptures to Respects below Ido-
 latri, and darken them into Objects for
 our Wonder, not Adoration. There we
 shall see (a Sight worthy dying for) that
 Blessed Saviour, of whom the Scripture
 L does

Εσκήνω-
σεν ἐν ἡ-
μῖν.
Ioh. 1. 14.

Mat. 7. 37

Ioh. 7. 46.

does so Much, and so Excellently entertain us, and who having Done and Suffer'd so much for us, does so highly deserve of us, both upon the score of his Infinite Perfections, and upon the account of his Inestimable Benefits. Yes, there shall we see that Holy and Divine Person, who when he vouchsaf'd (as his Favourite-Disciple speaks) *to pitch his Tent among us*, and dwell with men on Earth, to fit them by his Merits and Example to dwell with him in Heaven, did so admirably mix an awful Majesty with an humble Meeknesse, and the assum'd Infirmities of his human Nature with the seasonable Coruscations of his Divine; and express in his whole life, so Perfect and Exemplary a Virtue, and yet so much Sweetnesse and Gentlenesse towards those Aspirers to it, that were the most Short of it, that the Jews themselves could say of him, That *He had done all things well*; and his very Enemies, that were employ'd to apprehend him as a Malefactor, confess'd even to those that sent them to do so, That *never man spake like him*. And his Apostles, who had most Opportunity to Pry narrowly into his Actions, and were of a Condition and Breeding very unlike to infuse into them Heroick Resolutions, did, in Spight of the frequent Reproofs their failings ex-

sorted

torred from him; and of the Hardships that
 attended his Service, think even Death it
 self in his Company, more Eligible, than
 Life led out of it; *Let us also go that we may* Ioh. 11. 16
die with him, (says even the distrustful Tho-
 mas to his fellow-Disciples.) But, Linda-
 mor, we shall there see the Son of God, not
 in that *Form of a Servant*, which he put on Phil. 2. 7.
 that he might Suffer for us, and exercise his
 Priestly and Prophetick Function here be-
 low; but in that Regal State and Condi-
 tion, which belongs to him by virtue of his
 Kingly Office; on whose score he is styled
 in the Scripture, *King of kings, and Lord of* Rev. 19. 16.
lords; All power or authority being (as Mat. 28. 18.
 himself speaks) given Him both in Heaven
 and in Earth. And how Nobly attended
 may we suppose this Divine Monarch to
 be in his Exalted Condition in Heaven,
 when in his state of Humiliation on Earth,
 whilst he was in the *wilderness among the* Mar. 1. 13.
wild Beasts, the *Angels* are recorded to have
ministred unto him; and, whilst he lay swath'd
 in a homely Manger, the multitude of the Luk. 1.
 Coelestial host were heard to solemnize his
 miraculous Birth, according to that passage
 of the Writer to the *Hebrews*, *When he* Heb. 1. 6.
bringeth in the first begotten into the world, (he
 saith) *And let all the Angels of God worship*
him! And yet such considerable and noble

Creatures, those Immaterial Intelligences
 2 King. 19. call'd Angels; are, that One of them in One
 35- night was able to destroy above a hundred
 and fourscore thousand men, in the blas-
 phemous *Senacherib's* impious Camp. And
 so much Majesty, and Superiority, does
 their Nature give them, in reference even
 to the Eminentest of Mortals, That, when
 the undaunted *Joshua* had boldly Challeng'd
 one of them, that appear'd to him in the
 likeness of a Man, and demanded, Whom
 he was for? when he knew him to be an
 Angel (unless he suppos'd him to be that
 promis'd Messiah, who is else-where call'd
 Mal. 3. 1. *the Angel of the Covenant*, as it is in the
 Original, and in the same Text *the Lord*)
 he alters his Addresse unto him into this
 Joth. 5. Submissive one, *what saith my Lord unto his*
 13, 14. *servant*? And ev'n wise and holy *Daniel*
 himself, who was the second person of
 the World for Power, and the first for
 much nobler Attributes, Wisdom and
 Understanding, who saw so many Go-
 vernours of vast Provinces, and Professors
 of admired Magick, inferiour to him-
 self, yet confesses to the Angel, that ap-
 pear'd to him, That he was confounded
 and disanimated at his presence, and add-
 Dan. 10. *How can the Servant of this my Lord talk*
 17. *with this my Lord*? We may safely there-
 fore

fore expect that we shall then behold our Saviour not in those Disguises which, disguis'd him in their Eyes that onely consider'd his Sufferings; but in that triumphant Condition, wherewith they are now Rewarded. The Thorns of his (now no more Galling, but Adorning) Crown will appear upon that radiant Head of his, more glorious, than those of the flaming Bush, Exod 3.2. wherein God appeared to *Moses*. And we shall not see that Despicable form which made the Prophet say (personating the generality of the Jewish Nation contemporary with the Messias)-----
He hath no Form, nor Comeliness, and when we shall see him, there is no Beauty that we should desire. But we shall see him encompass'd with so much Majesty, and Shining with so much of his genuine Splendour and Beauty, that we shall deservedly esteem him *Nephle, the Admirable.* Isa 53. 2.
 And our raviſh'd Souls shall by the more attentive Contemplation of him, but find more cause to imitate the Spouse in *Solomon's* myſtick *Epithalamium*; who having dwelt upon the Beauty of the ſeveral Parts that concurr'd to the Accomplishing the Divine Bridegroom, exclaims in an Epiphonema, very contrary to the Expression lately mention'd

Cant. 5.
10.

in the Prophet, *He is altogether Desires*, or by an Hebraism, *Most desirable*, which our English renders, *He is altogether lovely*. His Eyes will there appear, as St.

Rev. i. 14. *John* represents them, of active Fire, and will into the willing Breasts of the Ravish'd beholders shoot Flames as Pure, as Holy, and as Deathlesse, as those Fathers of the Church, who believ'd not the Angels altogether Incorporeal, may be suppos'd to have conceiv'd the Seraphims to consist of. Certainly, since (as the Scripture informs us) *It never entred into the Heart of Man, what God has reserv'd in Heaven for those that love him*; That Glory can be but Imperfectly express'd by the bare Epithet of Inconceivable, with which God rewards the meritorious Sufferings and Obedience of that Onely begotten Son of his Love, for whose sake he is pleas'd to confer on so many Thousands of Men, unimaginable

Dan. 12. 3. *Glories*. He that vouchsafes ev'n to many of his Servants a Brightnesse like that of the Starrs, will sure communicate a more radiant Lustre to the *Sun of Righteousnesse*, that Onely Son of His, whom

Mal. 4. 2. (to borrow inspir'd Expressions) *he hath made Heir of all things, by whom also he made the Worlds: who being the brightnesse*

Heb. 1.
3, 3.

of his Glory, and the express Image of his Person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purg'd our Sins, sate down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, far above all Principality, and Power, and Might, and Eph. 1. 21. Dominion, and every Name that is named, not onely in this world, but in that which is to come. Thereby exalting him not onely above all Earthly Princes and Potentates, but even above the Highest Orders of the Spirits of the Cœlestial Hierarchy.

But apprehend not, *Lindamor*, that *Self. 19.* this sublime Exaltation of Christ will make him despise the meanest of his Saints, or disdain Communion with him. For, *St. Paul* assures us, That he was in the form of God, when he vouchsaf'd to take *Phil. 2. 7.* upon him the form of a Servant, to make us Free; and, sure, he that condescended so far, and stoop'd so Low, to Invite and Bring us to Heaven, will not refuse us a gracious Reception there. In the days of his flesh he was pleas'd to own *Lazarus*, ev'n in the Dishonours of the Grave, and vouchsaf'd him in that despicable Condition the glorious Title of his Friend. And when he descended the Mount of Olives, all the loud Acclamations of

the glad Multitude, that sang *Hosannas* to him, and strew'd his way with their Palms, their Vestments, and their Praises; could not divert him, from Deploing, ev'n with Tears, *Jerusalem's* approaching Fate; and expressing in the midst of his Triumphs a Concern, for the very worst and stubbornest of his Enemies. And, lest it should be thought, that he was thus concern'd for worthlesse Mortals, onely whilst he Shar'd and Felt the Miseries of their Condition; give me leave to observe to you, *Lindamor*, that immediately after his Resurrection, whilst the Sense of the sudden and unexampled Change of his Condition was Fresh upon him, and the Remembrance of the Apostles Ingratitude in deserting him, almost as Recent; he stuck not to give those very Disciples that forsook him, the glorious Title, (and that a more Familiar one than we find him to have allow'd them on Earth,) of his *Brethren*; and particularly shews himself Sollicitous for that *Peter*, who, in spite of all those empty Boasts, wherewith he not onely seem'd to defie Death, but Christ's Prediction too, did not onely Forsake his Master, but Deni'd him. He can in Heaven be so concern'd for his distressed Members here on Earth, that not onely he can take

notice

or notice of expiring Stephen, throw that Acts 7.
 cloud of fatal Stones that batter'd down his
 Prison; and can, when Saul was persecuting
 the vulgar Christians, cry out unto him,
Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? as if A& 9. 4.
 He, and those that Love him, were but
 One: But in the Messages he sends to the In the se-
 Angels or Governours of the seven Chur- cond and
 ches, he sufficiently manifest, That single third
 Christians may be as particularly in his Chapters
 Thoughts, as if they had no other Object: of the A-
 His Greatness will not make his Kindness pocalyps.
 less Familiar, but only more Obliging; He
 disdains not ev'n after his Ascension to
 say, *Behold, I stand at the door and knock,* Rev. 3. 20.
if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I
will come in to him, and will sup with him, and
he with me. That King, in the Parable, by
 whom Himself is represented, is pleas'd
 himself to welcome each Individual trusty Matth. 25
 Servant with a peculiar, *Euge bone Serve;*
 And in another Parable he scruples not to
 represent the great Condescensions and Fa-
 miliarity, wherewith the Lord shall remu-
 nerate the faithfull and watchfull Servants,
 by telling his Disciples, *Blessed are those Ser-* Luk. 12.
vants, whom the Lord, when he commeth, shall 37.
find so watching. Verily, I say unto you, that
 he shall gird himself, and will make them to sit
 down to meat, and will come forth to serve them.

At

At which Expression, you will the lesse Admire, if you Consider, that besides that it is Parabolical, and probably Hyperbolical, and therefore not to be taken (as the French speak, *au pied de la lettre*) in a strict sense: we find in the Evangelical Story, that our Saviour disdain'd not to converse familiarly with Publicans and Sinners, nor even to Wash the Feet of his own Disciples: And since he condescended to such Familiarity to those frail Mortals, so many of whom were apt to turn the Favours of God into Wantonnesse, we may the lesse admire his gracious Condescensions to those, the Sinfulness of whose Condition will keep them from turning his Vouchsafements into any thing, but Occasions of Joy and Gratitude. Marvail not, *Lindamor*, as at an Impertinency, that I appear so Sollicitous to possess you with high Apprehensions of the supereminent Dignity and Felicity of our Exalted Saviour; and, that in the Loftiest and most magnificent Expressions, the Scripture affords me, I have endeavour'd to make out to you, that the bright Sun of Righteousness is now grown incapable of suffering Eclipses, but shines with unclouded and unequal'd Splendor; and that we shall in Heaven (as the Writer to the *Hebrews* speaks) see Jesus who was made a little (or for a short while

while, *ἑσχατὴ*) lower than the Angels, for Heb. 2. 9.
 the suffering of Death, crown'd with Glory and
 Honour. For it will make Heaven more Hea-
 ven to us, to find Him reigning there, who
 hath Suffer'd so much for us; and for whom,
 if we e're come thither, we shall have so
 much Suffer'd. For, since our Love will, as
 the rest of our surviving Graces, be Per-
 fect'd, and grow Compleat in Heaven; the
 ineffable Happiness of our Dear Redeemer,
 must needs bring an Encrease to ours, com-
 mensurate to the Ardency of our Love for
 him, and we shall relish no Happiness more
 than That; which is therefore Ours, because
 He is happy, and Supposes in Him, what it
 Confers on Us. Besides that, since the Regal
 Dignity, wherein (as Mediator) he is In-
 stated; may make us owe our Salvation to
 his Sentence, as well as to his Merits; Hea-
 ven it self will be inestimably endear'd to us,
 by our Injoying it upon his Account. I need
 not tell you, what a value Lovers are wont
 to set upon the least Favours that can be be-
 stowed on them by their Mistresses, and that
 oftentimes a worthless Ribband, a Bracelet
 of Hair, or some such Trifle, that nothing
 can make precious but Her presenting it, is
 higher valued by the transported Lover,
 than the richest Presents of Nature, or of
 Fortune. How great a blessing must it then
 be,

be, *Lindamor*, to owe Joys, that need not en-
dearing Circumstances to merit the name of
Happinefs; to a Person so belov'd, that even
Heaven it self will bring more felicity to the
amorous Soul, as it is a Proof of his Love,
than that it is a Donative of his Bounty.
As passionate Brides do incomparably more
value the Wedding-Rings which their glad
Lovers give them, as Pledges, than as Gold.
'Tis said of the persecuted and disgrac'd A-
postles, that *they rejoyc'd to have been counted*
worthy to suffer shame for his Name. But if
they deservedly Rejoyc'd to be allow'd to
Suffer for him; of how much Joy shall they
have just cause, that are admitted to Reign
with him? His having supported the Hard-
ships and the Toyls (for I must now call
them Evils) to which our afflicted Condi-
tion of Mortality is Expos'd, does so much
Alleviate them, and refresh us under them,
that in this sense also it may be truly said, that
the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and
by his hurts we are healed. But he that Re-
liev'd us even by his Cross, will sure do More
for us by his Crown, when he shall Admir,
and even Invite each faithfull Servant to no
less a Blessing, than *to enter into his Masters*
joy. So rich a Source of Happinefs did
Christ Design, to Make himself to us in all
his Capacities and Conditions, that in Hea-
ven

A&S. 41.

Isa. 53. 5.

Mat. 25.
31.

ven and in Earth, it Was, and Will be, his gracious and constant Imployment, to share our Griets, or impart to us his Joys; and either Lessen our Miseries by his Sufferings, or Encrease our Happinels by his Felicity.

Expect not, *Lindamor*, that I should So- *Sect. 23.*
lemnly beg your Pardon for this seeming
Excursion, till I come to think it a Digressi-
on, to insist on the Blessedness of Christ in
Heaven, treating of the Happinels which
those that Love him will enjoy there.
Wherefore, not to spend time in imploring
a needless Forgiveness, I shall proceed to
tell you, *Lindamor*, that in Heaven we shall
not only see our Elder Brother Christ, but
probably also all our Kindred, Friends, and
Relations, that Living here in his Fear, Died
in his Favour. For, since our Saviour tells
us, that *the Children of the Resurrection shall* *Luk. 20.*
be iskyyeles, equal to, or like, the Angels; who *36.*
yet in the Visions of *Daniel* and *St. John*, ap-
pear to be acquainted with each other :
Since in the Parable of the Miserable Epi- *Luk. 16.*
cure, and the Happy Beggar, the Father of
the Faithfull is represented, as knowing, not
only the Person, and present Condition, but
the past Story of *Lazarus* : Since the In-
structor of the Gentiles, confidently expects
his Converted and Pious *Thessalonians*, to be
his

1 Theff. 2.
19, 20.

Dan. 2.

his Crown at that great day; When the ha-
ving turned many to Righteousness shall, as the
Scripture foretells, confer a Star-like and
Immortal Brightness. Since (which is chief-
ly considerable) the Knowledge of particu-
lar Actions, and, consequently, Persons, seems
requisite to the attainment of that Great
End of God, in the Day of Judgment, the
Manifestation of his Punitive and Remune-
rative Justice: Since, I say, these Arguments,
besides divers others, are afforded us by the
Scripture; we may safely conclude it Pro-
bable; that we shall Know each other, in a
Place, where, since nothing requisite to Hap-
piness can be wanting, we may well suppose
(at least, if we can imagine Here, what we
shall think There) that we shall not want so
great a Satisfaction, as that of being know-
ingly Happy, in our Other-selves, our
Friends. Nor is this only Probable, *Linda-
mor*, but 'tis not Improbable; that those
Friends that Know us in Heaven, shall Wel-
come us thither. For, since Christ assures
us, that the very Angels (though they be
so far from being Related to our Persons,
that they are Foreiners to our very Nature)
Luk. 15. 7. receive Accession of Joy for a relenting Sin-
ner, that by Repentance Begins to turn to-
wards God; you will not think it Absurd,
that in a Place, where Charity shall not
only

only continue, (as St. Paul speaks) but grow perfect, our dear Friends should rejoyce to see us, not only Begin to Turn towards God, but Come Home to him. Nor is it unlikely, that our transported Souls shall mutually Congratulate each other, their having now fully escaped the numerous Rocks, and Shelves, and Quick sands, and threatening Storms, and no less dangerous Calms, through which they are at length arrived at that peacefull Haven, where Innocence and Delight (which are here so seldom match'd) are inseparable Companions, both of each other, and each blessed Resident. With those friends we here Lamented, we shall there Rejoyce. And 'twill be but need, that the Discovery of each others Virtues should bring us to a mutual Knowledge of our Persons; for otherwise, we shall be so Chang'd, that we should never know our Friends; (and should scarce know our selves, were not an eminent Encrease of Knowledge a Part of that happy Change.) For those Departed Friends, whom, at our last Separation, we saw Disfigured by all the ghastly Horrors of Death, we shall then see assisting about the Majestick Throne of Christ, with their once *vile bodies transfigured into the likeness of his glorious body*, mingling their glad Acclamations with the Hallelujahs of Thrones,

Gen 46.
30.

Thrones, Principalities, and Powers, and the most dignifi'd Favourites of the Cœlestial Court. I need not tell you, *Lindamor*, that we shall be more justly Transported at this Meeting, than was good old *Jacob* at that of his Son *Joseph*, whom having long mourn'd for Dead and Lost, he found not only Alive, but a great Favourite, ready to welcome him to an unknown Court. For, whereas the Patriarch said to his son, *Now let me dye, since I have seen thy face*; the seeing of our Friends in Heaven will assure us, that we shall for ever Live with them there. The Re-union of Friends being there as privileg'd from Divorce, as that of Soul and Body, (which scarce will be more strict and satisfactory.) For, here indeed, if our Friends do not allay our Love or Affection by unwelcome Actions, or their contagious Sufferings, we commonly dote on them to a Degree, that, as it were, Reduces God to deprive us Early of them, and Snatch our Idols, and his Rivals, from us. But there, our, on both sides, compleated Graces, will not only Deserve, but Allow a higher Strain of Friendship. The near Contemplation and Fruition of the infinitely transcendent Perfections of the Creator, keeping all our Kindnesse to the Creatures, not only Subordinate To the Love we owe to God, but
Grounded

Grounded On it; as Excited Needles, when they stick fastest to each other, owe their Union to their having both been touched by the Load-stone; to which they have therefore Both of them stronger Inclinations, than Either to the Other.

There, probably, we shall satisfactorily *See. 24* understand those Deep and Obscure Mysteries of Religion; which the profoundest Clerks that love not to Flatter themselves, acknowledge, they are unable fully to Comprehend; being, after all the Toyl and Industry of their anxious Enquiries, reduc'd to sit down with the Apostle's *Expos.* in Ad- *Rom. 11.* miration of that Depth, whose Bottom they *33.* cannot Fathom. There we shall Understand those obscure passages of (That Divine book and incapable of Flattery) The Scripture, which, notwithstanding all that Bold Criticks, and Learn'd Expositors have Attempted to illustrate it, does still continue in many Places, Obscure. There, discerning how exquisitely the several Parts of Scripture are fitted to the several Times, Persons, and Occurrences, wherein their all-foreseeing Author intended most to use them, we shall discern not only a Reconcilableness, but a Friendship, and perfect Harmony betwixt those Texts, that here seem most at Variance, and shall discover not only the

M

Sense

Sense of the Obscurer passages, but the Requisite of their having been written so Obscurely. That strange and peculiar, as well, as otherwise Cryptical Method and Style of Scripture, which often costs us so much Study to find it Rational, we shall there discover to be Admirable, and worthy of its Omniscent Author. There, I hope, we shall have clearly expounded to us those Riddles of Providence, which have, but too often, Tempted ev'n Good-men, to Question Gods Conduct in the Government of the World; whilst the Calamities and Persecutions of Virtue, and Innocence, seem Approv'd by him, who Accumulates Prosperities on their Criminal Opposers. There, we shall be convinc'd, that all these Seeming Irregularities, which the Heathen thought fit to impute to the giddy Whimsies of a Blind female Deity, are not only Consistent with Gods Justice and Goodness, but are Productions of it. And though such a Belief do here to Intelligent Persons, seem perhaps a greater piece of Self-denial, than to refrain from Wine, or Gold, or Mistresses; yet in Heaven it will appear as Reasonable, as here we find it Difficult. For, as *Bildad* speaks in

Iob 8.9. Job, We are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon Earth are but a Shadow. And the shortnesse of our Transitory lives,

not permitting us to Continue long enough Spectatours here, to see above a Scene or two at most of that great Play, Acted by Mankind upon the Stage of the World, 'tis no wonder, we are apt to harbour sinister thoughts of the Contriver of a Plot, whose neither Beginning nor End we are acquainted with. Which yet is little less Injurious, than 'twere to Censure the lofty Tragedian *Seneca*, or some other matchlesse Artill, having perused but a Piece of some Tragedy, whereof the Latter part never arrived at our view. But, when once God's whole Plot (if I may so speak) and Conduct in the Administration of the World, shall come to be Disclos'd; all those Revolutions and Occurrences of Empires, States, Families, and Particular Persons, which men are here so prone to Quarrel with, will there appear so Just, so Requisite, and so Seasonable, that those very things, which Here tempted us to Deny God, shall There engage us to Praise him; and we shall not so properly be Satisfy'd with his Providence, as Ravish'd. But especially, we shall be Transported with Wonder and Gratitude, when God shall vouchsafe to discover to his particular Servants, the Reasons of his Dispensations towards them, and make out to them not only the Necessity and Justice, but ev'n Mercifulnesse

Vulnesse of those very Afflictions, that were
 more imputed to his Severity, (no Stroke
 from Gods Paternal Hand, either lightning
 Sooner, or falling Heavier, or staying Lon-
 ger, than the Occasion, that Extorted it,
 exacted) and convince them, that their
 Hopes were never Disappointed, but to Se-
 cure their Title to Better things than those
 they hoped for ; nor their Inferiour Inte-
 rests prejudic'd, but for the Advantage of
 their Supreme ones. Yes, all that unwelcome
 Darknesse, that here surrounded our pur-
 blind Understandings, will vanish at the
 dawning of that Bright, and (as St. *Peters*
 * expression may be interpreted) Eternal
 day ; vvherein the Resolution of all those
 Difficulties, vvhich here Exercis'd (and
 perhaps Distress'd) our Faith, shall be gran-
 ted us to Revvard it. And I must professe
 to you, *Lindamor*, (as Unfashionable as such
 a Profession may seem in a Gentleman nor
 yet Two and Twenty) that I find the study
 of those excellent Themes, Gods VVord, and
 his Providence, so Difficult, and yet so Plea-
 sing and Inviting, that could Heaven afford
 me no greater Blessing than a clear Ac-
 count of the abstruse Mysteries of Divinity
 and Providence, I should value the having
 my Understanding Gratifi'd and Enrich'd
 vvvith Truths of so Noble and precious a Na-

ture

2 Pet. 3.
 12.
 * *inudog*
alia v. 8.

ture, enough to Court Heaven at the rate of renouncing for it all those unmanly Sensualities, and trifling Vanities, for which inconsiderate Mortals are wont to forfeit the Interest their Saviour so dearly bought them in it.

Nor shall we onely converse with Saints *Self. 25.* and Angels, but with that infinitely more glorious Deity, that made them, what they are, without at all impoverishing himself. In Heaven, we shall enjoy (its Maker) God, and see Him as he is, who (as the Scripture telleth us) shall then be *all in all*: Com- *I Job. 32.*
prising all the goods, we value in the Crea- *I Cor. 15.*
tures, as Eminently and Fully, as the Sun *28.*
doth the Light that Twinkleth in the Starrs.

If one that was none of the least of the *Anaxagoras.* Philosophers, scrupl'd not to tell the man that ask'd him, What he was born for, that, It was to contemplate the Sun; If our best Naturalists themselves, though the Darknesse that is here cast upon Things, and the Dimnesse of our Intellectual Eyes, (which I remember *Aristotle* fitly compares to those of an Owl at Noon-day) permit us to discern but very little of that Wisdom, Power, and Goodnesse, which he has express'd in the Creation; are yet often transported and ravish'd with a just Admiration

of the Perfections He has displayed in his Workmanship. If the wise Queen that came so far to visit *Solomon*, was put almost into an Extasie, by the sight of his (though Wife, yet Humane) Ordering of things ; And if the *Angels themselves* (as *St. Peter* informs us) *desire to look into the mysterious contrivances of God*, in order to Man's Redemption : How great a Satisfaction, *Lindamor*, may we justly conceive it must needs be, to be admitted to See so much of God, as Heaven will Discover to us ? Especially, since so much of our future Happiness will consist in that Beatick Vision, (as the School-men justly call it) that *St. John* concluded, that *we shall be like God*, because we *shall see Him as He is*. And our Saviour himself paraphrases our Coelestial felicity by this blessed Vision, where he says, *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God* : As on the other side, the Writer to the *Hebrews* employs the being Deni'd the sight of that divine Object, as a Description of extreme Wretchednesse, in that Text, where having exhorted those to whom he writes to follow peace and holinesse ; he adds, as the formidabl'st Menace which he could make use of to Deterre them from slighting his Exhortation, *without which, no man shall see the Lord*. And by this Vision our Saviour seems

1 Pet. 1.
12.

1 Ioh. 3. 2.

Mat. 5. 3.

Heb. 12.
14.

seems to describe the happinesse even of Angels; where, forbidding the Scandalizing of any of those little ones that believe in him, he adds, to enforce what he had said, that *their Angels do always see the face of his* Mat. 18.
Father in Heaven. We shall be so taken-up 10. with the Contemplation and Fruition of that Glorious Object (in whose Infinity all goods are Included and Dilated) that Ages numberlesse as the Joys That Beatifick Vision abounds with, will scarce afford us leasure for a Diversion to any other Pleasures, than those it self creates. Which are so Numerous, and so Entire, that we shall there Desire nothing that we Have not, except more Tongues to sing more Praises to him, or at least a Capacity to pay him greater Thanks for what we Have. And even those Desires, Gods gracious Acceptation will make, in being Conceiv'd, Accomplish'd: for, otherwise Heavens Residents scarce know any other Want, than that of Need to Wish; The Compleat Blessednesse of their Condition, reducing them to a happy Uselesnesse of Wishes, by affording them a full Præ-possession of all the Objects of Desire. There Time, like Fire, having destroy'd What ever it could prey on, shall at last Dye it self, and shall Go Out into Eternity. Whose Nature is

Much, that though our Joys, after some Centuries of Years, may seem to have grown Elder, by having been enjoyed so many Ages, yet will they really still continue New, not onely upon the scores of their Welcomeness and Freshness, but by their perpetually Equal (because Infinite) Distance from a Period. There, our Felicity shall always be the Same, yet ever New. Weariness arguing Imperfection, either in the Object, or the Appetite; the Former of which is Impossible in God, and the Latter shall cease in Heaven. Where our Felicity shall be so great, that Variety (it self) shall not be needed as a Part of it. And if Heaven do admit Variety, it may be supposed such a one, as shall consist in a Further Knowledge of the First Object (God,) not a Forsaking of it; and such as arises from the fixt Beholding of the changing-necks of Doves, or such as we may see in the diversifi'd Refractions of the same sparkling Diamond. In God, there is (if I may so speak) such a various Identity, that the Fruition of him both Satisfies and Creates Desires: though That, without Satiety; and This, without Disquiet. Other Delights, like the usual Cloaths we wear, quickly grow Stale, and are soon worn out; whereas Coelestial Plea-

Pleasures participate the Prerogative of the Jews Garments in the Wildernesse, of Deut. 29. 5 not Impairing by being used Long. But as the amorous Needle, once joyn'd unto the Load-stone, would never, uncompell'd, forsake the enchanting Mineral; but, after Ages, cling no lesse closely to it than at the first Moment of their Union: So do the Saints in Heaven, with the same Undiminish'd freshnesse, ever possesse their Joys, as if each moment were the First that they possess'd them in. And if their Happinesse do not improve by lasting Enjoyment, 'tis perhaps but because it was at first incapable of Increase. Or, if our Pleasures do admit Accession, they shall receive it from our Assurance, that we shall taste them for Ever, and perpetually repeat (or rather continue) the same renew'd Fruitions To an Eternity, endear'd by nothing more, than by the quiet Leisure it will afford us, undistractedly to Employ it, in Celebrating of the Author's Praises; and In a Condition, happier in that by it we grow past Doing, than past Suffering, Ill. In Heaven, (in a word) our inexhausted Joys will be so Numberlesse, and so Immense, that we shall Need (as well as Have) Eternity it self to taste them fully.

But, *Lindamor*, it was not my Design to Self. 16.
give

give you a particular Topography of this Coelestial Canaan; but onely in a few words to let you see, that 'tis a *Land flowing with Milk and Honey*. And though I acknowledge, I have given you but dark Descriptions (and sometimes rather Poetical than Chorographical) of what the Apostle styles,

Col. 1. 12. *The Inheritance of the Saints in light*: yet since, to whet our Longings, for Fruitive (or Experimental) Knowledge it is reserv'd among the Prerogatives of being in Heaven, to know how happy we shall be, when There: And since what the Scripture hath reveal'd of Paradise, seems meant rather to Quicken our Obedience, than Satisfie our Curiosity; I may for those purposes, have perhaps tolerably perform'd that task (of Heavenly Topography) by the Acknowledgments of my Disability to do it Worthily. I shall now onely add this Property of our expected Blisse, that the vast Multitude of Partners does detract nothing from each private Share, nor does the Publicknesse Of it lessen Propriety In it. This Ocean of Felicity being so Shoarlesse and so Bottomlesse, that all the Saints and Angels cannot exhaust it, it being as impossible for any Aggregate of Finites, to comprehend or exhaust one Infinite, as 'tis for the greatest number of Mathematick Points

Points to amount to, or constitute, a Body. Our neighbour-Regions do all Enjoy the benefit of Light as well as We; yet we enjoy not Lesse, than if they enjoy'd None. Indeed, there is this difference between the Sun of Righteousnesse, and that of Heaven; that, whereas the Latter by his presence Eclipses all the Planets (his Attendants;) the Former, though radiant with a much mightier Splendour, will by his Presence Impart it to his Saints: according to that of the Apostle; *When Christ who is our* Col. 3.4. *Life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in Glory.* So that the Elect, in relation to this Sun, shall not be like Starrs, which his shining Obscures and makes to disappear; but like polish'd Silver, or well-glaz'd Arms, or those vaster Balls of burnish'd Brasse, the tops of Churches are sometimes adorn'd with, which shine not till they be shin'd upon, and derive their glittering Brightnesse, and all the dazling Fire that environs and illustrates them, from their being expos'd (unscreen'd) to the Suns refulgent Beams. *I am my beloveds, and my* Cant. 6.3. *beloved is mine*, says every 'aint (with the Spouse in the Canticles) to his Redeemer. *David* says of them that put their trust in God. *That he shall abundantly satisfie them* Psal. 38. 6 *with the fatnesse of his House, and make them*
drink

drink of the River of his pleasures : As if he meant to insinuate, that , As when a multitude of persons drink of the same River, none of them is able to Exhaust it , and yet each of them may have the full liberty of drinking as much as he Can , or as much as he Could, though none but Himself should be Allow'd to drink of it : so , whosoever enjoys God , enjoys him Wholly , or at least doth enjoy him so Entirely , in Relation to that man's Capacity , that the Fruition of whatsoever rests unenjoy'd of God , is forbidden by the Immenfity of the Object, and not the Præpossession of his Rivals. The Angels , though of a Nature Differing from ours , and thereby plac'd above the personal Experience of our sufferings, and infirmities, do yet so sympathize with us , that (as our Saviour informs us) they rejoyce at the repentance of a sinner. And, though the Members of the Church Militant , and those of the Triumphant, live as far asunder, as Heaven is from Earth, and are not more Distant as to Place, than Differing as to Condition; yet St. Paul reckons all the Saints to be but *one Family in Heaven and Earth*. If then the disparity of Residences, of Qualities, and of Conditions, cannot Now hinder the Lovers of God from being so concern'd in one another ; how much of endearing Kindness may

Luk. 15. 7.

Eph. 3. 15.

we

we suppose, that they will Enterchange; When both their Love shall be Perfected, and all those other Graces too that are proper to Cherish & Encrease it. For, the same Apostle, who, to assist us to conceive the Strictness of the Union both betwixt Christ and his Saints, and the Saints among themselves, tells us, that *He is the Head, and they are his Body, & Members in particular*; teaches us to make this Inference, That (to expresse his Doctrine in his own Words) *If one Member suffer, all the Members suffer with it; and if one Member be honour'd, all the Members rejoyce with it.* Yes, *Lindamor*, in that blest Condition, our Wills being perfectly conform'd unto our Makers, no Saint nor Angel can enjoy his Love without possessing a proportionate Degree of Ours. And then, since perfect Friendship appropriates to each Friend the Crosses and Prosperities of the other, (as good *Barzillai* could not be higher oblig'd by *David*, than by the Kings kindness to his Son) each several Beatitude in Heaven shall (in some sort concern the whole Society, and) be Ours. As Astronomers teach us, that the Earth receives Addition of Light by the Suns Beams bestow'd upon the Starrs, and from the Moon reflecting upon Her. And because our Personal Capacities are too too Narrow, to contain
All

1 Cor. 12:

v. 27, 28:

2 Sam. 19: 37.

All that Joy, we are (by the strange Arithmetick of Friendship) in a manner multipli'd into as many Happy Persons, as there are Saints and Angels blest in Heaven. Our perfect Union to our Common Head, and mutual Communion with Each other, applying and bringing home every Felicity of Theirs to Us. This Friendly and Reciprocal Sympathy, reaching us each Glorifi'd Saints Blessednesse, and Him ours, by a blest'd Circulation, which makes us Encrease, by our Resenting them, those Joys (of others) whose Encrease we Resent. But my Thoughts are engaged in so good Company, *Lindamor*, that they keep me from considering; how fast the Hours passe, and have almost made me forget, that the Time which my Occasions allow'd me for Scribbling to you, is so far spent; that not now at last to Reprieve you from the Persecution of my blunt Pen, were to be almost as Injurious to my own Affairs, as to your Patience. Hereafter yet, I may possibly make you some amends for this, with Riper Discourses of the Nature and Duties, or (if you will) the Properties and Returns of this Love, to which I have hitherto presented you Some Motives. To (the last of) which I might add, That, our Love to the Creature is an Earnest, but to God 'tis a Title; the One makes

makes Us the Object's, but the Other makes the Object Ours : That, since there is in Love so strange a Magick, as to Transform the Lover into the Object Lov'd ; we ought to be extremely careful of the Dedication of a Passion, which, as it is plac'd, must either Dignifie our Nature, or Degrade it : and not to Adresse to any Lower (or, which is all one, to any Other) Object, the Highest Intensity of a Love, which cannot Stoop without our Degradation. And these I might expatiate on, and Recruit them with many other Motives, additional to those I have already insisted on ; but that I may more properly reserve them to the Treatise of the Properties of that Love, whose Nature so partakes That of its Object, that there can hardly be produc'd more powerful Motives to it than the Conditions of it. Since then (as I freshly intimated) I cannot but fear that your tir'd Patience, as well as my urgent Occasions (though these will recall me to morrow Morning to my own *western* Hermitage) doth at present summon me to leave you ; and since I cannot do so in a happier place than Heaven, I shall suspend my Farewells, onely to beg you to believe, that so Noble a Motive of Exalting Friendship, as the Ambition of rendring Mine a fit Return for Yours, hath so improv'd my Kindnesse,
that

that my Affection without wronging its Greatnesse, could not Expresse it self by any Lesse Attempt, than this of gaining you the Greatest, and the most Desirable of all Goods; by elevating (that Noble Harbinger of your Soul) your Love, to Heaven: Whose Joys alone are not Inferiour to those which the Being made Instrumental to procure them you, would really Create in,

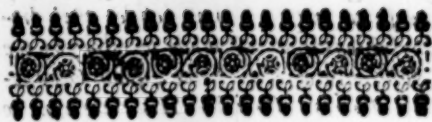
My dearest Lindamor,

Your most Faithful, most Affectionate, and most Humble Servant,

ROBERT BOYLE.

From *Leese* this 6th
of *Aug.* 1648.

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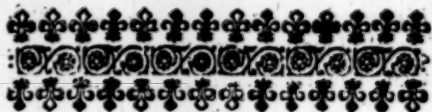


Hilst this third Edition of the foregoing Treatise was upon finishing, it hapned, that a Devout and very Ingenious Friend of the Authors, having press'd to have the Perusal of some Occasional Meditations that lay by him, on several Subjects, met, among others, with that which follows; And finding the Subject to be of Affinity with what is rather Touch'd than Insisted on, in the 65 page of the past Treatise; Touching Mens Inability to Praise God Worthily, and having a great deal of Partiality for the Reflection, would needs have it annex'd as it was, to the newly finish'd Edition: Notwith-
standing

standing the Author's having too just
 cause to urge, That besides the Im-
 perfections that are made necessary by the
 Sublimity of the Theme, such Occasio-
 nal Papers, especially His, are wont to
 have peculiar Unaccuratenesses, as being
 design'd rather to entertain the Writer
 himself, than any other Reader.

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An Occasional Reflection upon a

L E T T E R,

(Receiv'd in April, 1662.)

*Containing an Account of what passed on
the KING's Coronation-day, in a
little Country Town.*



Need not, *Pyrocles*;
after what we have
been reading, tell
you, that the Writer
of this Letter thinks,
that both in what he
has said of the King; and in what he
has done to Solemnize His Corona-
tion, he has behav'd himself rarely
well. For I doubt not; but you easily
discern by his Way of writing, that he
is highly satisfied with his Perform-
ances, and expects that he shall, if

N z

not

not be Thanked by the King, at least be Mention'd in the News-book. But will, I fear, be requisite to tell you, that this honest Man is not alone of his mind; for being his Landlord's Bailiff, he is esteem'd at that rate by his Neighbours, and look'd upon as a Man very considerable in his Parish; and is perhaps thought to have a right to Pity most of those that do not Admire what he has now been doing. And yet You and I, who pretend not to be Courtiers, can in his Rural *Encomiums*, and in his ill contrived way of Honouring his Prince, easily discover so much that might have been Mended, and so much that may be Laught at, that if the King, according to His wonted Graciousness, vouchsafe this Action his Smiles, it must not be in consideration of the Suitableness of the Performances to the Occasion, but, partly as they proceed from a Hearty, though ill-express'd, Loyalty and Love, and partly as they afford Him a Subject of Merriment. And not onely the nice Criticks, who have seen those Magnificent Solemnities, and heard the Eloquent Panegyrics,

negyricks, wherewith the principal Cities and Assemblies in the Nation have thought they did but Part of what they should; and not onely those Assiduous Courtiers, who by the Honour of a nearer Access have Opportunities (deni'd to others) of discovering those Particularities that may best give a high Veneration for a Great Person and a Great Prince to those that are qualifi'd to discern and relish such things; not onely these, I say, will have a quite other Opinion of the Rural Praises, and Antique Ceremonies that were so well lik'd a hundred miles from *London*; but this Country-man himself, if he were admitted to the Court, and bred a while there, would in time see so great a distance berwixt what he Has done, and what a Person better bred Might have done, that he could not remember without Blushes, what he now looks upon with Triumph.

And now I must on this occasion confess to You, *Pyrocles*, that I have (on other Rises) several times been revolving in my thoughts, what the Angels think of those Praises

and Descriptions of God that Men devise; (For I intend not here to speak of those the Scripture suggests) and wherein we are most Applauded by others , and do oftentimes perchance Applaud our selves. For those Coelestial Courtiers (if I may so call them) have several Advantages to assist them in the Celebration of our common Master, which we poor Mortals want. For first , They are free from those Selfish and Inordinate Affections, that too often hinder us, either from Discerning the Excellency of divers of God's Attributes and Ways , or from duly Acknowledging it. They have no Sins to keep them from decrying the Justness of what he does; They have no Ingratitude to oppose the fuller Resentments of His Goodness; and they are not tempted, not to discern and adore His Wisdom, for fear they should appear Culpable for repining at His Dispensations. And indeed their Longevity allowing them the full Prospect from end to end, of those intricate transactions of Providence, of which short-

short-liv'd Mortals do commonly see but
 a part; they are questionless far more sa-
 tisf'd with the incomparably better
 Contrivances they discern in the Man-
 agement of human Affairs, than we are
 with the Conduct or Plots of the most
 skilfully written Plays and Romances.
 Besides, Those happy Spirits, of whom
 the Scripture tells us, that *they stand*
before God, and that they *continu-*
ally see His face, have by that Pri-
 vilege the blest Opportunities of dis-
 covering in the Deity they Contem-
 plate and Serve, many Excellen-
 cies, which even They could never but
 by Experience have form'd any
 thoughts of; and they see in one
 anothers Solemn Adorations and
 Praises a way of Honouring the Ob-
 ject of them, so much transcending
 the utmost of what We here aim at,
 that their Homages to their Crea-
 tor may well be suppos'd of a far
 Nobler Kind than ours. And lastly,
 When I consider how much less un-
 worthy Thoughts and Expressions
 touching Things Divine the same
 Person may have, when come to his
 full Maturity of Age and Parts, and
 N 4 whilst

Luk. 1.
 Matth. 18.

whilst he was but a Child in both ;
 and when I consider , how much
 more Advantageous Conceptions of
 the Wisdom displayed in the Uni-
 verse , and particularly in the Contrivance
 of a Human Body , one that is
 a true Philosopher , and a skilful Ana-
 tomist may have , in comparison of
 a man illiterate , and unacquainted
 with Dissections : When , I say , I
 consider these things , and compare
 the dim Twi-light of Human Intel-
 lects in this Life , with that Clear and
 Radiant Light which the Scripture
 ascribes to Angels , I cannot but think ,
 that having to the Privilege of a
 much Nearer Access than is allow'd
 Us to contemplate God's Perfection-
 ons , the Advantage of having incom-
 parably more Illuminated Intellects to
 apprehend them with , they must
 frame otherguess Conceptions of the
 Divine Attributes , and glorifie the
 Possessor at an otherguess Rate , than
 is allowed to Those , whose Under-
 standings are so dim , and whose
 Residence is so remote from that
 bless'd Place , where the Perfections
 they would Extol are most Display'd.

Assisted

Assisted by these and the like Advantages, *Pyrocles*, those happy Spirits may well frame Notions, and employ Expressions in honour of their Maker, so far transcending Ours, that though the Angels Goodness keeps them, doubtless, from beholding them with Contempt; yet we may well think, they look upon them with such a kind of Pity, as that wherewith great Wits and Courtiers look upon the Mistakes and Imperfections of what they Did and Writ, when they were but School-boys; and as that wherewith, when we shall be admitted to the Society of the Angels, we shall look back upon our former selves. No, *Pyrocles*, to Praise God is a Debt, which though we should ever be Paying, we must always Owe, not onely because the renewed Obligations will last as long as we, but because, though the entire Sum were possible to be paid, we have no Coyn of the Value that would be requisite to make a Payment of that nature. 'Tis true indeed, that some men say much More than others upon

Heb. 10.

upon a Subject, on which none can say Enough, and which even *the Spirits of just men made perfect* can but imperfectly celebrate. It may be too, that the Praises we pay to God procure Us some from Men, and perhaps even from Orators and Encomiasts; and though I hope no Man can so far flatter himself, as to think he can Flatter what he can never do Right to; yet the Zealousness of our Endeavours, and the Applause that others entertain them with, may perhaps tempt us to think, that because in our Expressions we have Surpass'd our Selves, we have almost Equall'd our Theme: as if to make our Praises too great for any other Subject, were sufficient to make them great enough for God. But alas, how widely must we be mistaken, since our Expressions, if we speak sense, can at best but fully represent our Conceptions, and those being but the Notions of a Finite Creature, must needs fall extremely short of Perfections, which were not what they are, if they were not Infinite. No, *when* we have employ'd

ploy'd the loftiest Hyperboles , and
 exhausted all the celebrating To-
 picks and Figures of Rhetorick ;
when we have drest Metaphysical
 Abstractions in Poetick Raptures ;
when we have ransack'd what ever
 things are most Excellent among the
 Creatures , and having Defæcated
 them , and Pil'd them up together ,
 have made that Heap but a Rise to
 take our soaring flight from ; *when*
 we have summ'd up and left Beneath
 our Expressions all that we are here
 wont to acknowledge Above them ;
 nay , *when* Instructed as well as In-
 flam'd and Transported by that In-
 accessible Light , that is *Inhabited* <sup>1 Tim. 6.
16.</sup>
 by what we Adore , we seem Rais'd
 and Elevated above all that is Mor-
 tal , and above our selves , and say
 things , that nothing else could either
 Inspire or Merit ; even *then* , I say ,
 those Expressions , which any other-
 wise apply'd would be Hyperboles ,
 do but express our Devotion , not
 the Divine Object of it , and declare
 How much we honour Him , ra-
 ther than What He is . And in-
 deed , none but the Possessor of an
 Infinite

Infinite Intellect can be able to say, what the Possessor of other Infinite Perfections deserves to have said of Him. And what ever zealous skill we Praise God with, we do far less Honour Him than Injure Him, if we think our aspiringest Praises can arrive so far, as, I say not to *Reach*, but so much as to *Approach* their Subject.

But let not this inevitable Impotence (*Pyrocles*) Trouble, or Discourage Us. Those blessed Souls *Rev. 14. 4.* that follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes, do (as we are taught in the Apocalypse) make it their Business, and find it their Happiness, to spend a great part of their Eternity in Extolling Him, by whom they are plac'd in a Condition, where they can have no Employment, but what is Holy and Noble. And even here below, the Praising of God is a work, wherein we Imitate, though we do not Equal, the Angels, and are busied in the same Employment, though not with the same Skill. Nay, Heaven it self exempts not its Residents from an Impotence which belongs to

to Creatures, not as they are Imperfect ones, but as they are Creatures. Even the Members of the Church Triumphant do not Triumph over this necessary Impotence; their Praises may need Pardon, even in a Place where they can sin no more: and they can expect but from God's Goodness the Acceptance of those Praises, that are Improv'd as well as Occasion'd, even by their being made Partakers of his Glory. Nay, even in the Prophet *Isaiah's Exstatick Vision*, *Esa. 6. 2.* the Seraphims themselves, that are introduced as answering one another's glad Acclamations to God, are likewise represented as Covering (out of respect) their Faces with their Wings. But, *Pyrocles*, as I was saying, this unavoidable Disability to say things Worthy of God, need not at all trouble us; since we pay our Homages to one, whose Goodness our expressions can as little equal, as they can his other Attributes. He that Created us, will not Impute it to us, that we act but as Creatures; And since he has declar'd, that where there is a willing Mind, a man is ac-^{2 Cor. 8. 12.} cepted

cepted according to what he has, and not according to what he has not; The Impotence I have been speaking of ought to bring us rather Joy than Trouble, since the infinite Distance betwixt us, without lessening his favourable Acceptance of our Praises, supposes the boundless Perfections of Him, whom those Praises (through his Goodness) help to give us an Interest in; And no Son would repine at His Royal Father's Greatness, how Immense however, being sure that Greatness would not lessen his Kindness. For 'tis less Desirable to be able to describe the Power and Excellencies of him we have an Interest in; than to have an Interest in one, whose Power and Goodness exceeds what ever we can Say or Fancy of them.

To conclude, *Pyrocles*, since on the one side God is most truly said in the Scripture to be so *Glorious*, that he is *Exalted above all Blessing and Praise*, and consequently, though I could (to use St. Paul's phrase) *speak with the Tongues of Men and Angels*, yet the highest things I could say of the Divine

Nehem.
9. 5.

1 Cor. 13.
1.

vine.

vine Perfections, must needs be therefore far Below them, because a Creature were able to say them. And since on the other side it is of Us Men, that God vouchsafes to say, *whoso offereth* Pl. 50. 13. *Praise, glorifieth Me*; and his transcendent Excellency is so far from being inconsistent with a resembling Graciousness, that such a Benignity is one of the most conspicuous parts of it; I will not forbear to pay my Praises unto one, whose Deserving infinitely more than I can offer, keeps him not from Accepting as much less than he deserves. But then I must not Presume to fill my mouth with his Praises, without Sensibly acknowledging, that there is not any Subject, whereon my Expressions can more want Eloquence, than on this Subject, even Eloquence itself would want Expressions.

FINIS.